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ABSTRACT

This report provides an account of the Comprehensive Learning Program, an experimental program in literacy provided to adults by Fordham University's School Consultation Center (New York). The program targeted learning-disabled adults whose lack of literacy skills resulted in unemployment or significant underemployment. The program's design incorporated the following elements: (1) comprehensive planning for a broad range of problems; (2) specific delineation of intervention goals and priorities for both clients and staff members; (3) broad-based assessment of clients' strengths and needs; (4) vocational and other adult life-related content; (5) emotional support to sustain clients through program completion; and (6) use of skilled volunteer tutors. The report describes the program's research background, operation, screening, diagnosis, client characteristics, tutor training procedures, educational intervention, vocational counseling, and emotional support. The program was evaluated by analyzing retest results and qualitative findings in three intervention areas: educational achievement, vocational maturity, and emotional adjustment. Appendixes provide materials used in program administration. (Includes 35 references and a list of 11 tests and teaching materials.) (JDD)

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The Comprehensive Learning Program For Adults With Learning Disabilities

EC 300559

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Another Chance: The Comprehensive Learning Program

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CHAPTER I

THE NEED

Rosa A. Hagin

Another Chance is an account of an experimental program in literacy provided to adults who sought the help of Fordham's School Consultation Center. This Center is a part of the Division of Psychological and Educational Services of Fordham University's Graduate school of Education at Lincoln Center in New York City. Our location provides daily contact with the extremes of urban living, from the richness of the cultural events that take place in the concert halls of Lincoln Center to the tragic sight of homeless people bedded down for the night beside the buildings at nearby Columbus Circle. The University has accepted the challenge of educating students for leadership in dealing with the city's problems. The multilingual, multiethnic students enrolled in our programs look upon the city as an expanded classroom in which to learn to use their professional skills.

The School Consultation Center has, since 1983 addressed the problems of school children from non-public schools--Catholic,Judaic,Protestant, or independent schools--where special education services were not available under existing federal and state legislation. Students, particularly those studying school psychology and special education, work at the Center to meet the needs of children from these schools and to receive supervised training in assessment skills and intervention strategies. In the fall of 1986 a different kind of need appeared in the form of telephone calls from adults requesting help for their learning problems. Our first response was to regard these requests as beyond the scope of the Center's work. As one student observed, even furniture was the wrong size for adult clients.

As responsible clinicians, we felt we should explain that adult literacy services were not provided by the Center and then refer the caller to a more appropriate setting. The problem was to find appropriate settings for these callers. They were people who were underemployed or unemployed, discouraged, unable to deal with the city's bureaucracy, and bitterly disappointed in previous attempts to secure an education. As we talked with the callers, we realized that these people were seriously learning disabled. With the group work in the typical adult basic

education programs for educationally disadvantaged people, they became lost by the second or third session. Volunteer tutoring programs also did not understand their learning problems. The fees charged by private tutors were usually far above the income levels of our callers. There were few alternatives we could recommend.

A brief account of one of our callers illustrates the problems these callers faced:

> Karen was a forty-four year old single woman who had worked for a number of years as an educational assistant in a class for retarded children in the public schools. An administrative transfer moved her into a sixth grade classroom where she was asked to correct spelling papers containing words she could not read. Fearful that she might lose her only source of income, she took on a second job cleaning offices during the evenings. When she came to the Center, she was working from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM assisting in the sixth grade class and from 5:30 to 10:30 PM cleaning offices. Her appointments at the Center had to be scheduled on school holidays or inserted between her two sets of working hours.

It was to meet the needs of seriously learning disabled adults that we began what became the Comprehensive Learning Program. This program was designated as comprehensive because we believed that these adults needed more than educational services. They needed help in the world of work; they also needed emotional support to deal with the scarring effects of academic failure.

The application for support for a program in adult literacy, eventually submitted to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs and Rehabilitation Services, proposed to develop, operate, and test a model program to meet the educational needs of adults whose learning disabilities resulted in a substantial handicap to employment. We proposed that this goal would be realized through three specific objectives:

I To provide direct services to adults with learning disabilities by
   a. assessing the nature of their learning problems
   b. clarifying their attitudes, interests, and resources for

career development

c. formulating individual remedial plans to meet the needs delineated by assessment
d. implementing these plans through an integrated program of tutoring, vocational counseling, and social work services.

II To provide indirect services for learning disabled adults by recruiting, training, and supervising a corps of tutors among adult students enrolled in a bridge to college program, Fordham's College at 60.

III To evaluate the effectiveness of this comprehensive program and to isolate essential elements in providing cost- effective services to adults with learning disabilities.

Our application for support of the model program was accepted as one of the Postsecondary Education Programs for the Handicapped of the U.S. Department of Education and funded for three years 1987 - 1990. It was housed in the School Consultation Center. Services were provided by students and Faculty of the Division of Psychological and Educational Services of the Graduate School of Education, the School of Social Service, and the College at 60 of the Fordham University at Lincoln Center.

Our Clients

The program targeted learning disabled adults whose lack of literacy skills resulted in unemployment or significant underemployment. They were people who have potentially average or above average abilities, but exhibited a severe discrepancy between potential and actual educational achievement. This discrepancy resulted in a substantial handicap to mature vocational planning and social adjustment.

Their learning problems are not primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, or of environmental disadvantage. They are people who failed during their school years to learn to read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculation at a level appropriate to their potential abilities, despite adequate sensory acuity, normal intelligence, conventional educational opportunities, and appropriate motivation.

Many of these people had found that currently existing adult literacy programs did not meet their complex educational, vocational, and emotional needs. For example, the pace of instruction in many basic skills programs was too rapid for them to master the material. When they enrolled, they found the old, familiar feelings of failure and frustration returning, adding yet another defeat to those already experienced during the school years. This problem may help to explain the high school drop out rates of many such programs. For example, Kirsch and Jungeblut found in their sample that six out of ten white or hispanic youth and eight out of ten black youth who attempted General Educational Development diploma programs dropped out before completing the program. (Kirsch & Jungeblut, 1986, p. 48 -49)

The content and tutoring methods of many existing programs resemble conventional instructional methods these people had experienced during their school years. Having failed with these methods the first time, these people do not hold much hope for success the second or third time around. Furthermore, the content of the textbooks may often seem unrelated to the real life needs for economic security they experience every day. Finally, admission and placement in the programs was often based on limited knowledge of the learner's needs. Complaints we heard often centered around the inadequate match between the individual's skills and the content being taught.

Incidence of Literacy Problems in Adults

Hard data on the incidence of learning disabilities in adults are not available for a variety of reasons. The estimates that have been made are extrapolated from special education enrollment data which place the number of learning disabled children and youth served in special education programs at nearly two million (Silver & Hagin, 1990 p. 77). However, the well designed research of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) have provided data on the levels of literacy in their young adult sample. These findings have highlighted the plight of undereducated young people in our technologically oriented society (Kirsch & Jungeblut, 1986). As the American economy shifts from one based on industrial production to one in which information processing and service industries predominate, literacy requirements for economic self sufficiency have increased.

The NAEP survey concluded that present day literacy cannot be assessed by the criteria used in the World War II era (i.e. the ability to sign one's name and to answer multiple choice questions on fourth grade level reading material). NAEP chose instead to use real life tasks, such as locating information in printed text, transforming fragments of information read into new knowledge, communicating results in writing, using graphs, charts, and tables, as well as text.
Three scales were developed:

- prose literacy: the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts that include editorial, news stories, and directions.

- document literacy: the knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in such documents as job applications, payroll forms, bus schedules, maps, tables, and indexes.

- quantitative literacy: the knowledge and skills needed to apply arithmetic operations either alone or sequentially, that are embedded in printed materials, such as in check books, resturant bills, order forms, advertisements.

NAEP data were secured from a national sample of 21-25 year olds (N=3600) living in the 48 contiguous states. This sample was interviewed for 60-90 minutes to obtain information on background characteristics, language, education, vocational aspirations, employment, and to administer the literacy stimulation tasks summarized above.

In terms of traditional criteria for literacy, the results are encouraging. The NAEP data show that only 6% of the sample lacked the literacy and language skills of fourth grade pupils and could, therefore, be called illiterate. However, the results are less encouraging when viewed in terms of success rates with the contemporary literacy requirements of the simulation tasks.

Successful Responses with Prose Literacy

Write a letter to show billing error 71%

Locate information in an almanac	50%
Interpret a newspaper article	37%
Select appropriate title for article	21%

Successful Responses with Document Literacy

Match items on shopping list to coupons	96%
Follow travel directions using a map	57%
Determine departure time from bus schedule	20%

Successful Responses with Quantitative Literacy

Calculate check book balances	50%
Determine correct change on menu charges	38%
Calculate cost of catalog items	10%

These data support NAEP's conclusion that, while **illiteracy** is not a problem, **literacy** in terms of the requirements of everyday tasks presents problems for substantial numbers of young adults (Kirsch Jungeblut, 1986 p.5). Many of these young adults are not really illiterate in the narrow sense that it has been defined in the past, but they still have considerable difficulty in applying their academic skills with tasks that are closely related to economic survival in present -day society.

The question is how many of these young adults are learning disabled as the term has been defined above. Both quantitative and qualitative estimates can be cited on this point. Joan Knight has found that one-third of the students in New York City Adult Basic Education classes showed symptoms of specific learning disabilities. This is a knowledgeable estimate based on many years of teaching and administrative experience in these classes.

In addition, major literacy campaigns have claimed space in publications and time on television channels to publicize the problem. Private industry has organized the Council for Effective Literacy and individual businesses have contributed to the support of programs in order to obtain more literate employees. At least three hot-line telephone services operate in New York City to provide

information regarding the availability of classes and volunteer opportunities in adult literacy programs.

Focus of the Comprehensive Learning Program

What do these well-publicized data and services mean for the individual adult who seeks help for a learning disability? Our experience with clients at Fordham's School Consultation Center is not so encouraging as some of the advertising suggests. The number of adults seeking help for their learning problems has increased each year since the Center's organization in 1983. These adults seek help in understanding their learning problems and in improving their educational skills in order to get a job commensurate with their abilities. This is not usually their first request for help; they often describe a long and tortured itinerary through classes, agencies, and private practitioners that ended in disappointment. Some of these clients demonstrate skills close to giftedness in art, graphics, or mathematics, but the realization of consistent vocational success is imperiled by their learning disabilities and the attrition of the emotional consequences of learning failure.

Adult outcomes of learning disabilities need not be so disappointing. For example, a follow-up study of 87 young adults has demonstrated that, with appropriate educational and supportive services, academic attainments and vocational outcomes can be quite positive (Silver & Hagin, 1985). On the basis of this and other follow up studies and on the basis of experience with clients served at the School Consultation Center in the past, the following points were highlighted to guide us in designing a program for young adults with learning disabilities.

-Comprehensiveness and Specificity
An effective program should be both comprehensive and specific: Comprehensive in planning for the broad range of problems adults with learning disabilities present; specific in delineating interven-
-tion goals and priorities for both clients and staff members.

-Assessment
An effective program should provide adequate assessment of the client's strengths and needs in order to develop meaningful intervention plans. Broad-based assessment is especially important

because of the heterogenous nature of the disorder and the variety of needs and compensations that adults with learning disabilities demonstrate.

-Relationship to Adult Life

The program should draw upon vocational and other adult-life related content, rather than reteaching conventional remedial reading content and methods that were ineffective with clients when they were enrolled in school programs. Content should focus on the world of work.

-Emotional Support

An effective program should offer practical and emotional support to sustain clients through completion of their program objectives. Dropout prevention measures include valid selection criteria, shared reasonable objectives in tutoring, and individual counseling.

-Teaching/Learning Focus

Teaching/Learning is at the heart of the program. All staff members should be involved in the teaching/learning process. This cost-effective model makes use of volunteer tutors because of the need for individual instruction for our clients. Our tutors were people enrolled in the bridge-to-college program, Fordham's College at 60. It is recognized that skilled tutoring requires more than good intentions and the ability to follow a workbook. Effective programs provide initial training and on-going supervisory support for tutors throughout the program. Such support is necessary in order to ensure implementation of educational objectives and continuity of service to clients.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH BACKGROUND: ADULT LEARNING DISABILITY

John Capozuca

While research on adults with learning disabilities has increased dramatically in recent years, systematic studies of this population remain sparse. Though terminology varies widely, Frauenheim (1978) describes the condition as "A disorder in which the capacity to learn to read is impaired despite adequate intelligence, appropriate education and sociocultural opportunity, and basic intactness in those sensory functions associated with normal learning" (p. 21). Until recently, the prevailing view was that, given appropriate intervention strategies as school children, people with learning disabilities would require no further services in adulthood. In short, a "cure" would have been effected. Recent follow-up studies, however, indicate largely mixed results, and the majority point to less optimistic outcomes. While a number of individuals do compensate well for their inadequacies, the consensus of opinion among workers in the field indicates that learning disabilities are a life-long condition, and as such require continued interventions as children suffering from the condition reach adulthood (Spreen, 1988).

Descriptions of Learning Disabled Adults

Spurred by reports in the popular media, individuals representing two distinct sources have begun to present themselves to an ill-prepared profession with stubbornly persistent learning problems. One source appears to be the initial recipients of mandated services under Public Law 94-142, who have recently exhausted the resources available to them in the schools as they reach adulthood. The other source represents those individuals who somehow managed to elude identification. Critchley, (1973), in his eloquent essay, *Some Problems of The Dyslexic,* has attempted to define the difficulties encountered by such individuals.

> Maybe he does not read as well as he fancies he does. I suspect that he does not read for the sheer pleasure and fun of it like non-dyslexic individuals. He is not bookish; he doesn't browse in libraries like his contemporaries in age intellectual attainment. Rather does he prefer to

> talk, and indeed he may talk well, and may be outstanding as a public speaker, even an orator. He is more likely to attain a very high rank as a practical man, someone who works with his hands, or who indulges in pursuits which are artistic rather than literary. Or he may well shine as an administrator, or business executive, and in any of these he may achieve a very high rank, but not in literary work which does not come too easily to him. (p.9)

Critchley concludes that such individuals are perpetually slow readers. They exhibit difficulties assessing the gist of any argument or document. In conversation they will often mispronounce words that are otherwise familiar to them from reading, because they fail to associate such words with their spoken equivalents. They tend to rely on what they hear over what they have read, and when in positions of authority, they will often rely on oral summaries provided by assistants and secretaries. Writing presents perhaps even greater obstacles. Clearly, as Critchley has demonstrated, learning disabilities in the adult must be specified beyond the simplistic notion of academic deficits of childhood persisting to adulthood.

Buchanan and Wolf (1986), examined the psycho-social histories and diagnostic test data of thirty-two learning disabled adults (23 males, 9 females). The majority were students, others worked in various fields from unskilled to professional and technical. Nine percent were not employed. Most characterized their school experiences as negative. The majority reported academic problems in other family members as well. Personal strengths most frequently mentioned included congeniality, ambitiousness, optimism, enthusiasm, creativity, manual dexterity, logical thinking, strong verbal skills, and good memory. The major problem areas noted were hyperactivity, disorganization, dysphoric affect, poor self image, and lack of motivation. Paradoxically, though many characterized themselves as lacking motivation, they often indicated that they worked very hard to accomplish short-term goals. Intelligence test scores and reading achievement test data indicated that no relationship existed between intelligence and reading ability. This was attested to by the fact that while intelligence test scores ranged from low-average to superior, thirty four percent of the sample were considered dysfunctional readers. Written language was the area with the largest number of disabled subjects. Based on these results, Buchanan and Wolf (1986), concluded that

many of the characteristics of learning disabled children described in the literature persisted into adulthood.

Frauenheim (1978), focused on the academic achievement of forty adult males diagnosed as learning disabled in childhood. Mean age was eleven years, six months at the time of diagnosis. IQ scores at the time of diagnosis ranged from below average to superior. Academic deficits at the time of diagnosis in childhood were summarized as mean grade levels: reading, 2.3; spelling 1.6; and arithmetic 3.4. On the follow-up, the adult mean reading score was 3.6, with sixty three percent of the subjects scoring below fourth grade level, generally equated with functional literacy. Comparison with reading levels at the time of diagnosis demonstrated minimal overall progress of 1.3 years in the average intervening time period of ten years! spelling and arithmetic on follow-up (2.9 and 4.6, respectively), reflect similarly minimal progress in these areas as well. This indicates that serious residual learning problems persist. While it cannot be doubted that, based upon these data, subjects in Frauenheim's study (1978), continue to experience difficulties in learning that first emerged in childhood, one is prone to speculate as to whether the schools failed to provide adequately for these individuals when they were students, or whether they had simply been poorly taught.

Their Problems

In order to develop a comprehensive view of the needs of learning disabled adults, Hoffmann and his co-workers (1987), surveyed three groups: 1) Learning disabled adults eligible for vocational rehabilitation; 2) providers of services to this population; 3) advocacy groups for the learning disabled. The learning disabled adults in the sample consisted of 381 persons, largely male, with a mean age of twenty three years, two months. 63% had earned a high-school diploma or GED, 12% had attended college, and 92% had received special services in school. Only 36% were employed. 68% lived with their parents. Listed on the surveys were academic and cognitive learning problems. The most significant problems reported by the learning disabled adults were reading, spelling, arithmetic, written composition, and handwriting. These findings are in keeping with those obtained on an achievement test measure in the studies by Buchanan and Wolf (1986); Frauenheim, (1978); and others, (Blalock, 1982).

In contrast to Buchanan's and Wolf's (1986), study, where subjects reported 'good memory' as a strength on a behavioral checklist, Hoffmann and his co-workers (1986), reported that memory difficulties were the single most frequently selected cognitive processing deficit identified by the adults. The service providers and advocates surveyed also most frequently identified memory problems as representing the most significant cognitive processing deficit for the learning disabled. The survey results further indicated that the adults overwhelmingly wanted additional help with their problems with academic assistance ranking foremost among the areas selected.

The adults with learning disabilities surveyed were found to be free of major health problems; however, previous head injuries were reported by 24% of the respondents. This finding was deemed inconclusive by the authors, as it was determined that a similarly high incidence is reported in the general population. Items relating to career and vocational training indicated that limited amounts of such training had been provided to the adults, mostly in high-school. After high-school less training was reported. This highlights a great need for secondary and post-secondary vocational and career education experiences for the population. While only 36% of the 381 respondents reported being employed at the time of the survey, most of those who were employed reported that their employers were aware of their learning disabilities. Many employers permitted job modifications to accommodate their employees' needs. While most respondents were in low-level jobs with limited opportunities for growth and advancement, the majority liked their jobs and made extra efforts to do well.

Regarding barriers to employment, learning disabled respondents to the survey cited filling out job applications as the task presenting the greatest difficulty. This was followed in difficulty with knowing where to go to find a job, and finally with where to go for job training. Service providers, however, viewed not following directions as the major obstacle to successful employment. Only 12% of the learning disabled saw this as a problem. Hoffmann and his co-workers (1987), attributed this difference in perceptions to the youth and inexperience of the respondents.

Of the problems of daily living surveyed, difficulties with money and banking was most frequently selected by the adults, followed by problems with driving a car.

Both tasks relate to the sequencing and spatial deficits common to the population. The perception of problems with money and banking identified by the learning disabled was shared by the service providers and advocates, who also noted that time management was a problem for the group. Regarding problems following directions, few of the learning disabled adults shared the perception noted by the service providers and advocates that time management was an area of difficulty. Hoffmann and his co-workers (1987), cite this as an indication of the adults' often inaccurate self-perceptions.

Some Successes

In sharp contrast to the subjects in the previous studies cited the learning disabled individuals in Blalock and Johnson's (1987), sample were characterized as "special education successes....self-supporting, productive members of their communities" (p.34). The 93 adults diagnosed as learning disabled were served by the speech department and Learning Disabilities Program at Northwestern University. They consisted of 65 men and 28 women ranging in age from 17 to 48 years, the majority being middle-class. All were self referred for problems with learning. 39% reported a history of familial learning disabilities, the majority of these in the immediate family. As the data that is to follow indicate, Blalock and Johnson's (1987), positive characterization of their subjects may reflect not so much a different population of learning disabled people as it does a different socioeconomic status and geographic location.

Educationally, all but five of the Northwestern sample had received a high-school diploma. The majority of the others were either in school or planned to return, but were seeking remedial assistance. Histories revealed chronic school problems, with difficulty first noted prior to or during primary school. One-third had been referred for assistance with their learning problems, with 19 of the 31 emerging with the diagnosis for learning disability. Other diagnoses included "immature", reading disabled, language impaired, emotionally disturbed, and "poorly motivated". The remaining two-thirds claimed to have realized that they had problems, though they had not been labelled. Of those having received special services, the majority found individualized instruction for the learning disabled most helpful. Counseling was also considered beneficial to assist them in coping with related emotional problems, but was not viewed as a specific aid for their learning problems.

Current educational problems centered on reading. Word attack skills of most clients were weak and it was difficult for them to learn new vocabulary words. Reading rates were described as slow, and reading for pleasure was a contradiction in terms. For those who had attempted post-secondary training, taking notes in class was particularly difficult as the adults expressed problems with simultaneous listening, comprehending, and writing. Furthermore, determining what was particularly relevant in a lecture for note-taking could often not be determined. This corresponds to Critchley's (1973) contention that dyslexics often have difficulty teasing out the gist of an argument or document.

Also, as Critchley (1973) has noted, writing presented even greater difficulties for this group. Problems with spelling, grammar, and punctuation often resulted in dependence upon others for editing and proofreading. Some clients also cited difficulties with oral language as a problem. Many of their problems related to deficiencies in organization of the content, verbal comprehension, and memory. As has been reported in other studies, time organization represented a serious obstacle for this group. Blalock and Johnson (1987), reported for example, difficulties estimating time required to complete assignments and to prioritize.

Vocational histories reported by Blalock and Johnson (1987), are not unlike those of the previous studies cited (Buchanan and Wolf, 1986; Frauenheim, 1978; Hoffmann et al., 1987). Occupations ranged from unskilled laborers to professionals, with the majority of those employed in relatively low-level positions such as clerical and sales. The older members tended to report numerous job changes interspersed with periods of unemployment. Those with strong social skills, faring well in the initial employment interview, accepted jobs that they were unable to perform competently. Reported problems included pressures in handling several responsibilities simultaneously, inability to keep up, inconsistent performance, costly errors, and slowness.

Often the adults were perplexed as to just what went wrong. Blalock and Johnson (1987) concluded that "very explicit instructions, opportunities for rehearsals, and highly specific feedback" (p. 39) were required to ensure successful employment outcomes for this population. As in the survey conducted by Hoffman and his co-workers (1987), any vocational training they had received had been spotty

at best and largely inadequate. The most helpful efforts cited by the authors involved collaborative endeavors with professionals knowledgeable about learning disabilities. While not all dyslexic adults require vocational counseling, many, though functioning adequately at work, still had problems. Tremendous energy was expended in devising compensatory strategies to elude detection of their disabilities. While self-organization, planning, demand for speed and coping with stress present problems for most workers these pressures were thought to be particularly critical in their employment experiences.

Prescriptions for The Future

Gray (1981) has provided important guidelines to be considered in addressing the issues of learning disabled adults. In terms of general principles, he advocates that options be made available to adult dyslexics commensurate with those provided for achieving readers. This, of course, implies that the necessary support services be available to allow for successful outcomes. Gray (1981) stresses the need for individualized planning to suit the needs of the individual as opposed to the more conventional process of assigning a program first. As suggested by Polloway, Smith, and Patton (1984), dyslexic adults should be considered life-long learners. This requires that professionals abandon the notion that whatever is not achieved by the termination of secondary school will not be achieved, and allows for programming to address the needs of individuals of more advanced age. Regarding prescriptions, Gray (1981) suggests an approach that views adults dyslexics as individuals rather than assigning composite characteristics frequently associated with the population. He wisely points out that most systematic studies have yielded inconsistent profiles.

Clearly this review supports the idea of learning disabled adults as a heterogeneous group cognitively, neuropsychologically, vocationally, emotionally and socially. Gray (1981) argues that all involved professionals should engage in a concerted effort to establish valid and reliable identification criteria to determine service eligibility as well as consistency in research. Paramount among these criteria should be a ***severe*** discrepancy between ability and achievement. However, severity must also be defined appropriately encompassing the goals, strengths and needs of the individual.

Regarding diagnosis and interventions, Gray (1981) states that the instruments of diagnosis must relate practically to the life and work needs of the adult and should provide data relevant to vocational and social development. The focus must be on practical life demands rather than on esoteric psychological processes. This should involve reinterpretation of existing instruments from an adult perspective, as well as the development of new instruments appropriate to the task and target population. If new devices are to be developed, they should be geared to the assessment of competencies with regard to expectancies in the individual's environment.

Clearly, while basic literacy remains essential to viable employment, today's rapidly expanding society demands "technological literacy" (p. 429), and sensitivity to these changes further ensures expansion of options available to learning disabled adults in the workforce. Gray (1981) disavows the "read or nothing" (p. 430) approach and uses a provision of services which encourages the development of skills designed to help adult dyslexics function in a variety of settings despite ongoing skill deficits. To the greatest extent possible, clients should be involved in decisions regarding the relationships between programming and life tasks should be provided to secure understanding.

Regarding service delivery, Gray (1981) highlights the need for accessibility of formal post-secondary education for the adult dyslexic. This, he insists, must extend beyond simply permitting enrollment, and should encompass the kind of support services and structured programming described by Vogel (1987). The success of such endeavors depends logically on the increased sensitivity of educational administrators to the needs of learning disabled adults. The responsibility for this "consciousness raising" lies with professionals in the field. University based programs for learning disabled adults can do much to sensitize the community to the acceptance of these individuals and to provide the necessary support services to ensure success.

Of course, formal, post-secondary education may not be the goal for all learning disabled adults. For these individuals Gray (1981) has suggested the consideration of programs including adult education, trade and technical schools, library services, evening classes, volunteer programs under the auspices of community agencies. The involvement of individuals from the client's

environment (e.g. employers, family members, and friends) will go far in ensuring adjustments. Again Gray (1981) points out that ensuring awareness of community agency representatives remains the responsibility of professionals serving these clients.

Other important considerations include counseling services which have been shown to facilitate the effectiveness of the vocational efforts mentioned. Advocacy groups made up of parents and professionals can do much to ensure that the needs of dyslexic adults be addressed. An important component suggested by Gray (1981) is that learning disabled adults seem to respond best when provided with a single contact person capable of negotiating the complex systems that must be integrated to provide comprehensive services and follow-up.

Regarding further research, Gray (1981) highlights the need for continued case studies to reveal subtleties that might otherwise be overlooked in large-scale investigations. However, it is clear that only through systematic empirical inquiries can the knowledge base of the field be sufficiently broadened to encompass the varied agenda presented here.

Like Gray (1981), Polloway and his co-workers (1984) advocate a life-span approach to the learning disabled. For them, "one must have a clear conceptualization of adult life before proceeding confidently in work with learning disabled adolescents and children" (p. 179). They contend that the focus of services provided to dyslexic children must change as they approach adolescence, and that in adulthood problems are compounded by the complexities inherent in adult life. These factors include, but are not limited to, societal demands, vocational contingencies, and the need for self-direction. The authors warn of the follow-up studies which they view as endeavoring to determine if specific skill deficits and behaviors have persisted while ignoring "the concomitant problems of adulthood" (Polloway et.al., 1984, p. 180). They highlight key phases within adulthood, that must be transitioned to progress to each subsequent phase. For these phases to be negotiated successfully, amenability to resources is required. "An individual's adaptive resources will determine his/her ability to respond to the demands of specific life events" (Polloway et. al., 1984, p. 181). The problems specific to learning disabled adults is a less than optimal preparedness for the necessary transitions. The authors contend that it is incumbent upon interested professionals to ensure that

their charges are equipped for the "cognitive management of stressful events" (p. 183).

Summary

This chapter has described problems facing learning disabled adults in contemporary society. It has been shown that thought within the field has shifted from a position where disorders of learning were believed to be ameliorated if they were addressed in childhood, to one that acknowledges their life-long status.

The growing body of research on adults with learning disabilities indicates that the majority of these individuals cite ongoing problems with reading, spelling, written composition, and to a lesser extent arithmetic as their paramount difficulties. While these difficulties impacted negatively on the school lives of these people as children, many of these problems now exert deleterious effects on the vocational aspirations of these individuals as adults. Furthermore, cognitive and spatial deficits impair the capacities of these adults to perform necessary tasks associated with day to day life, such as driving or following instructions. Perhaps most serious of all is the devastating effects of years of repeated failure and self blame on the dignity and self esteem of these people. Sadly, though many eventually realize that they need help and seek assistance in coping with their feelings of frustration and inadequacy, many of the professionals they consult are ill-equipped to help them because they do not understand the nature of learning disabilities.

Several workers have studied the problems of learning disabled adults and preliminary projects have been undertaken to address their needs. These involve careful diagnosis based upon established criteria, including the development of new and appropriate instruments; intervention strategies geared towards practical life demands, as well as those targeted at basic skill deficits; consciousness-raising within the educational community to provide equal opportunity for post-secondary and vocational education; and finally, an opportunity for successful counseling experiences with enlightened professionals sensitive to the specialized needs of learning disabled adults.

CHAPTER III

OPERATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING PROGRAM

Rosa A. Hagin

Operation of the Comprehensive Learning Program was organized in terms of its three major objectives: Direct Services, Indirect Services, and Evaluation. Activities for implementing each of these objectives varied according to the specific focus of each of the three years of the project.

Year I: Getting Started

The focus of the first year was on getting all aspects of the project operational. During the first month the project staff (psychology graduate students) were recruited. They were oriented to the specific problems of adults with learning disabilities, to their specific responsibilities for provision of services, to the contributions of the various disciplines involved, and to methods of interactive planning to help the staff become a smoothly functioning team.

Arrangements for consultants were made in the areas of Vocational Counseling (Caroline Manuele-Adkins), supervision of Social Work (Mollie Katz), and evaluation (John Houtz), The Professional Advisory Committee was recruited and convened for a formal meeting. Informal contacts were made with agencies and organizations (e.g. New York Learning Disability Association Hot Line, New York Orton-Dyslexia Society, local units of the VESID, Bellevue Hospital Center, Lincoln Square Community Center) to provide information about the project and to generate referrals.

Awareness activities also involved the development and publication of a brochure to describe project services and application procedures. This brochure (a copy of which appears in the Appendix) was written and designed by a parent, a writer who was knowledgeable about learning disabilities because her own young daughter was being seen at the Center. Because our prospective clients do not read well, care was taken to provide print materials that could be read easily. Application procedures utilized personal telephone contacts and simple written confirmations,

so that prospective clients would not be embarrassed by their limited literacy skills during their initial contacts with the program.

A second aspect of our awareness activities was the recruitment of tutors from Fordham's College at 60. This college offers undergraduate liberal arts courses to adults over age 50. It serves as a bridge from the world of work to the Fordham Community. Involvement in the College offers an opportunity for retired people or people contemplating retirement to enhance their knowledge, meet new friends, develop new interests, continue active engagement with scholarship, and in some cases to pursue an undergraduate degree. Courses are taught by regular Fordham Faculty in the four divisions of the College: humanities, arts, social science, and mathematics/science.

The students of the College at 60 represent a cross-section in terms of ethnic, religious, economic, and occupational backgrounds. The majority of them have had some college work and some have earned degrees earlier in their lives. As people who value learning, they represented excellent role models for our clients. Through the cooperation of the two directors of the College at 60, Cira Vernazza and Rosemary De Julio, information about the Comprehensive Learning Program was disseminated with the course registration materials. We held two general information meetings that generated so much interest that the ten tutors needed for service during the first year of the project volunteered for training. Details of training have been spelled out in Chapter VI.

Various clerical and administrative tasks were also set in motion. Organization of workspace and offices and acquisition of appropriate-size furniture was accomplished. Ordering of commercially available asessment and tutoring materials and duplicating of in-house materials was completed. Materials (including syllabi, VCR tapes, and transparencies) for training tutors were developed.

Evaluation plans were formulated and appropriate measures included in the assessment procedures. However, the major activities of the first year involved the implementation of the direct service components of the project.

Educational Interventions

-screening prospective clients
-identifying clients for whom the program was appropriate
-conducting diagnostic assessments for identified clients
-designing individual intervention programs for each client
-matching clients with tutors
-providing continuing support and supervision for each tutor-client dyad.

Emotional Support Services

-organizing the support group under the dual leadership of a psychologist and a social worker
-defining the nature of the support group to participants (particularly significant in view of their varying levels of sophistication in group processes)
-providing social work services for clients who needed individual counseling

Vocational Counseling

-delineating individual vocational needs of clients through individual interviews with the Vocational Consultant, Dr. Manuele-Adkins
-selecting those most in need of intervention to increase vocational maturity
-training the vocational counselor (Elizabeth Lorenzi) in the use of the Life Skills Program.

Indirect Services included staff training in a number of areas. The weekly case conference, in addition to serving as the decision-making point for admission of clients to the program, played a significant role in staff training. This conference was used to share information on new applicants, to discuss results of screening, and to follow the development of intervention plans for individuals. Discussions of which applicants were and which were not appropriately served by the program were particularly salient in building an information base on the nature of learning disability. It was, for example a revelation to some staff members to discover that every person who did not read well was not necessarily learning disabled. These weekly conferences were important also in developing effective group processes within the staff. Such training helped staff members to deal appropriately with

critical incidents, such as severe depression and psychiatric referral for one client, child care problems with several clients, and difficulties in scheduling that resulted in missed appointments. In addition to individual supervisiory conferences with tutors, frequent "Coffees" were held with the tutors and staff to keep all participants informed concerning the program activities.

Results of the first year's evaluation were useful for the formative information they provided. Effect size with educational measures, although not substantial, showed that positive educational changes had occurred with our group of seriously disabled readers. However, qualitative analysis of oral reading tests and tutoring logs showed the pervasiveness of problems in decoding in nearly all our clients. The lack of sound, automatic decoding skills hampered reading comprehension. Additional emphasis on these skills was warranted in planning for the specific interventions of the project's second year.

Year II:Differential Effects of Components

Although our plans called for random assignment of clients to specific intervention conditions so that second year results could be used to assess differential effects of these conditions through analysis of variance, several factors made such random assignment impossible. We became aware of marked variations in the strengths, needs, rates of progress, and availability of individual clients. The uniqueness of the learning patterns of each of the clients made it impossible to meet the assumptions underlying analysis of variance, and covariance procedures would have been out of the question. Furthermore, assigning clients to intervention conditions on the basis of chance, rather that on the basis of unique needs that had been demonstrated during assessment, would have done these people an injustice. Thus clinical practice superceded experimental design.

Practical considerations such as emotional problems severe enough to require individual counseling, variations among tutors (for example some enjoyed work with computers, others were reluctant to work with them), and job responsibilities that increased as our clients became more confident, limited the amount of time available for intervention. Therefore, assignment of intervention conditions was based upon the unique needs of individual clients. Each of the clients received two

types of intervention: one primarily educational in nature and one primarily affective:

Educational interventions

Tutoring

Tutoring including Computer Assisted Instruction

Affective Interventions

Vocational Counseling Group

Individual Social Work Services

Support Group

Two clients whose employment schedule permitted only limited intervention time received educational intervention only. Otherwise, intervention activities continued as planned. The diagram on the next page shows the distribution of these interventions.

Indirect activities continued as outlined during the first year. As an additional control over intervention content, detailed tutoring logs relating to educational objectives were kept by tutors to supplement analysis of educational activities.

Year III:Dissemination of the Comprehension Learning Program

The third year of the program focused on evaluation, integration, and dissemination. Summative evaluation of educational progress, emotional status, and vocational maturity was completed and appears in Chapter V of this report. Operation of the defined program including all educational and affective components continued as described in the two previous years. In addition we worked to document program parameters and to respond to requests for information about program activities. Formal presentations were made at the following professional meetings:

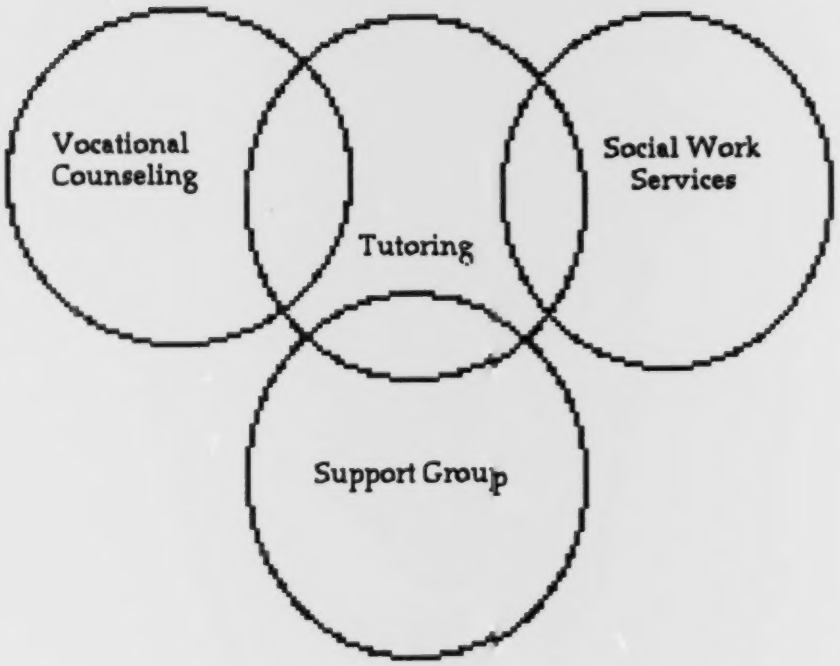
Reading Reform Foundation, New York City

Project Directors' Meetings, Washington D.C.

Learning Disabilities Association, Miami, Florida (1989), Anaheim, California (1990).

State Association for Adult Basic Education, Buffalo.

INTERVENTIONS



In addition, informal consultations were provided to agency staff members who visited the School Consultation Center. Of particular relevance to these organizations were the screening procedures which had been refined as a means of identifying appropriate clients. Rather than offering the services of the Center to do the screening for these organizations, we decided to teach the techniques to interested professionals so that they could incorporate the procedures in their own programs.

Planning for institutionalization of the project took the form of a proposal submitted to the New York State Office of Vocational Educational Services to Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) requesting approval as a vendor of services to VESID clients. Approval of this request was granted on October 1, 1990.

Tutors from the College at 60 continued their work with our clients. Because time did not permit the training of new tutors from the college at 60, some of the newly admitted clients were assigned to school psychology students who had elected field placements at the Center for their clinical practicum. These future psychologists received first-hand knowledge of the problems associated with learning disability in their work with our adult clients. One student commented in her course evaluation, "seven years of teaching first graders to read did not teach me nearly so much as my work with Bobby" (a severely learning disabled adult client).

Appropriate clinical procedures require planning for project termination with clients. We began such planning early in the spring of 1990. A series of exit interviews with each of the clients assisted them in transitions to appropriate settings. The support group was helpful also in keeping clients from feeling abandoned and lost with the completion of the program. This group continues during the 1990-91 year under the direction of a psychologist (John Capozuca) with other Center staff available as needed. Exit interviews highlighted current needs and defined sources of assistance and contact people at each of the sources; recommendations were summarized in a letter (a copy of one such letter appears on the appendix.). Some of the clients have found employment, others have acquired sufficient academic skills to handle post secondary programs or regular basic education programs available in community colleges. Details of these arrangements can be found in the chart of vocational and educational outcomes in Chapter X.

CHAPTER IV

ASSESSMENT

Rosa A. Hagin and John Kugler

Assessment consisted of two processes with distinctly different purposes: screening and diagnosis. The purpose of the former was to determine whether the program was appropriate for applicants; the purpose of the latter was to make a careful study of the client's needs in order to formulate individual intervention plans.

Screening

Because New York City area agencies referred numerous clients to our program, a relatively brief procedure was needed to determine whether the program was appropriate for individual applicants. Thus we developed a screening battery with the five components:

1. Psycho-social-educational history

A chronological history emphasizing educational opportunities, was obtained from each applicant. Particularly significant information items were found to be

-level of education
-in-grade retention in early grades
-stability of employment
-time of onset of academic difficulties
-previous attempts at remediation

2. Educational Skills

Wide Range Achievement Test was used to survey educational skills in oral reading, spelling, and computation. Our Phoenician Spelling Test was used to assess sound /symbol associations.

3. Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test

This measure assessed the individual's visual-spatial organization, fine motor control, and visual-spatial perception.

4. Figure Drawing

The human figure drawing was used as an indication of the client's perception of his/her self . It also assisted the psychologist in assessing the role of emotional factors in the client's learning problems and vocational adjustment.

4. Writing Sample

The client's written response to the question "What help do you want from this program?" served as a measure of spontaneous writing skills, as well as an indication of expectations from the program.

The form used for screening appears in the Appendix.

Purposes of Screening

The screening process is intended to determine the mutual suitability of the client and the program being offered. Screening addresses the need to identify rapidly and accurately those individuals who match the program's intended population.

There were several considerations in deciding to conduct screening. One important reason that screenings were completed on all prospective clients was to determine the need to conduct more extensive batteries on these individuals. In a number of cases the clients presented problems that were outside the scope of the services being offered by the program. It seemed appropriate to save them the time, as well as possible heightened expectations by doing preliminary assessments of their strengths and needs. A second purpose was economic. The program was unable to provide in-depth testing with each prospective client because of constraints of resources (time, expense, personnel) given the number

of referrals that were received. Screening offered a relatively quick measure of the match of the program for the clients' stated needs. When a client was found to be appropriate, information obtained could then be integrated into the data collected in the full battery; where the program was judged inappropriate for a given individual, the screening data could be used to make suitable referrals to alternate agencies.

A second goal focussed on the client's motivation to participate in the program. Screening information helped us to reduce the dropout rate. The clients' resolve to achieve their goals was a crucial determinant of their optimal use of the services provided. Finally, screening allowed the staff to ascertain the program's appropriateness for meeting the needs stated by the clients. Motivational differences fell into two general categories. The first group consisted of people who had attended other programs for some type of remedial help. Many of them had not stayed with these programs because their skills were not at a level at which they could benefit from the teaching provided. They were overwhelmed and misplaced in these programs. A second group of clients were what we termed "nomads", who went from one program to another without committing themselves for more than a few sessions. An examination of their histories provided useful clues regarding client motivation. Those described as overwhelmed and misplaced were the type of client we intended to reach. The "nomads", seemed less able to make a serious commitment to receiving the extended assistance that their learning problems required.

The Screening Process

The actual process of screening the clients involved several steps intended to help them and the staff make the best possible decision concerning an individual's participation in the program. The stages included the initial contact to make an appointment, obtaining a psychosocial history, administering a brief psychoeducational assessment battery, and integrating the findings and determining the appropriateness of the program at a case conference.

The first contact by the potential client usually involved a telephone call. At that point, initial details were provided concerning the focus and goals of the program. Enough preliminary information was exchanged regarding the client

and the program so that it was possible to begin to screen out from this initial contact individuals who felt that the program was not what they were looking for. When the program seemed appropriate, this telephone call resulted in the client's making an appointment to come in with a brochure that also provided a general description of the program.

When the client arrived for the screening, a form was given to them to obtain their informed consent for the screening process. The examiner read aloud the contents of the consent form while the client followed along. This was done for all clients regardless of reading level. The client was then encouraged to ask questions about the information provided in the form or about their concerns regarding the program. Once any initial questions had been answered, a psychosocial history was obtained. This interview probed three main areas: general development, school history, and employment history. The focus was on identifying markers in the individual's background associated with learning disabilities. Markers included:

-long term problems with directionality.
-special education interventions.
-relatives with specific learning problems or language delays.
-difficulties with specific academic subjects (i.e. reading, writing, mathematics, or a foreign language).

The second part of the screening involved administering a brief psychoeducational battery to the client. This consisted of the Wide Range Achievement Test-Revised, the Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test, the Human Figure Drawing, the phoenician Dictation Test, and a Writing Sample. The tests of educational achievement were examined quantitatively to obtain information about levels of functioning and processes leading to the performance. These tests, combined with the psychosocial history, were also examined for signs of a learning disability. Salient questions for interpreting screening results are listed in Table 1, on the next page.

Table 1

Questions for Interpreting Screening Results

Oral Language Does the client appear to have difficulty with auditory discrimination? Does the client have problems with the ordering of syllables within words?

Oral Reading Does the client substitute words of similar visual configuration? Does the performance indicate uneven word attack skills? Does he/she transpose, substitute or omit letters or syllables? Does the client substitute semantically similar words for the target word?

Spelling Does the performance indicate omissions, substitutions or transpositions of letters or syllables? Does the client write words of similar configuration? Does the client write words of similar meaning or of a different tense?

Arithmetic Does the client have difficulty understanding the concept of number? Does the performance indicate problems with sequencing as seen in any of the following: times tables, long division problems, or arbitrary sequences (i.e. money, time or measures).

Writing Sample Does the written copy appear to be much simpler than the client's oral language productions? Does the client write in simple monotonous sentences? Does the client substitute homophones for the intended word?

Acceptance Decisions

Information obtained from the screening was then presented during a case conference to the entire staff. The conference was composed of a multidisciplinary team that combined the different sources of data. The data were examined from the view of a specific learning disability being primarily seen in academic failure. Although the causes of educational difficulties are often diverse and complex, there are a number of adults who have learning disability as a primary diagnosis. These individuals require particular educational and vocational interventions. We believe this subgroup of learning disabled adults to be qualitatively, if not quantitatively different from other underachieving adults who applied to the program. A decision to admit was made based on three main questions:

1. Is this person learning disabled?
2. Does this person appear motivated to continue in the program?
3. Is the program appropriate for this person's needs?

Of these people, some were mentally retarded and needed full time occupational training programs. Some had high academic achievement and could benefit from directed study programs in colleges. Some were the nomads described above. Some presented emotional and motivational problems that were more appropriately dealt with in a mental health setting. Those clients for whom the program appeared suitable were scheduled for the more extensive psychological battery, which will be described later in this section.

The sample that was screened included people who appeared appropriate for the program, as well as people who had primary needs and concerns not addressed in a program for learning disabled adults. The identified problems of the accepted group included learning disability, learning disability with emotional overlay, and organic brain syndrome. The primary difficulties of the sample deemed inappropriate included emotional disturbance, mental retardation, conduct disorder and lack of educational opportunity.

There were two areas that distinguished three groups: psychosocial (especially educational history) and/or quantitative and qualitative educational

functioning. For example, 27% of the group found to be inappropriate for our program had completed a 2 or 4 year college program, as compared to 12% of the accepted sample. Of the learning disabled group who had completed college programs, many had basic reading and spelling skills at a pre-high school level.

Reliability

The reliability of the screening method was assessed to determine how consistently it could be applied by various staff members who administered the screening measures. Data from the screening measures were integrated at case conferences and served as the basis for independent ratings on a five-point scale by the social workers and psychologists who administered them. Inter-rater reliability was found to be 80% on the first 50 cases. There were minimal differences between the raters with 59% of the ratings identical and 21% of the ratings differing by only one point on the scale.

Screening Reconsidered

It is important to place the idea of screening in its proper context. Screenings are conducted when the resources available are insufficient to test and diagnose the sample being served. Ideally, a full battery should be administered to each individual suspected of having learning disability. Realistically, large scale, in-depth, individualized testing is not always possible. Therefore, screening is intended as a first step for those who appear to have a specific learning disability. It can be helpful in sifting quickly through a large group of referrals and finding those individuals who clearly need service other than those provided by the given program. It is not intended to serve as the basis for intervention plans or a final diagnosis. Once a person is seen as having a learning disability, or if questions remain as to the nature of the learning difficulties, a more extensive battery needs to be administered. It is not always easy to tell why an adult is having educational problems; a variety of procedures is necessary to understand and to plan effective remediation.

Diagnosis

A diverse clinical battery was used to determine individual client's educational and vocational strengths and needs. This battery included

measures of cognitive functioning, educational achievement, emotional adjustment, and vocational maturity.

Intelligence The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised (WAIS-R) (Wechsler, 1981) was administered to each of the clients for whom the program had been found appropriate on the basis of the screening measures. The WAIS-R is a well designed measure, psychometrically respectable and clinically useful. Its organization permits inter-scale and inter-test comparisons for profile analyses. In addition, the results of many factor analyses of the scale enabled us to study the clients' test results in terms of the factor structure of the WAIS-R:

Verbal Comprehension	*Perceptual Organization*	*Sequencing & Memory*
Information	Picture Completion	Digit Span
Vocabulary	Block Design	Arithmetic
Comprehension	Object Assembly	
Similarities		

Thus the WAIS-R was used not only to obtain estimates of the levels of intellectual functioning, but also to observe the client's approaches to solving a variety of cognitive tasks. These analyses raised some interesting questions about the relationship of learning disabilities and intelligence. Repeatedly our clients were found to earn some test scores within the borderline and retarded ranges, even through their management of daily living responsibilities and their levels of social judgment indicated higher levels of functioning. Reconsideration of the test content convinced us that acquired background knowledge on the basis of formal schooling and informal sources, such as reading, strongly influence cognitive functioning in adults. Having a learning disability may limit one's opportunity to acquire such background information and may limit one's ability to respond to specific subtests of the WAIS-R. It would seem that cognitive assessment of adults with learning problems must take into account the possible effects of a learning disability upon conventional measures of intelligence.

Achievement The Reading Cluster of the Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery was used to measure reading achievement. This

cluster assesses word recognition with unselected words (Letter Word Identification) phonic analysis skills with phonetically regular nonsense words (Word Attack) and untimed reading comprehension with cloze paragraphs. An in-house measure, the Phoenician Spelling Test (dictation of phonetically regular nonsense words) was used to assess the client's knowledge of sound/symbol associations. These measures were used to supplement the educational data obtained during screening.

Emotional Adjustment The ten basic cards of the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) were administered as a measure of emotional adjustment. The transcripts were analyzed in terms of Murray's needs/press formulation in order to clarify each client's motivation, perceptions of their psychological environment, emotional tone, and defensive operations. In additional research,(Capozuca, 1990) the language of these transcripts was also assessed in terms of semantic and syntactical maturity.

Vocational Maturity The Adult Vocational Maturity Assessment Interview (AVMAI) (Manuele, 1983) provided a measure of the clients' work history and vocational maturity. The AVMAI is a structured, scorable interview used to assess attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral aspects vocational maturity. Pretesting enabled us to assess the clients' vocational needs; post-testing with the same interview permitted evaluation of changes during the course of the program.

Intervention Plans

Assessment data, combined with insights obtained during initial screening, were integrated in individual intervention plans that were organized to highlight initial strengths, educational needs, and service priorities. These plans were discussed with client and tutor at the beginning of intervention. They were also used to monitor progress as the clients moved through various aspects of the program. We found that this integrated summary was necessary so that intervention methods could be diversified according to the needs of individual clients. It was also useful avoiding the gradual slippage tutoring may take into easy familiar tasks by keeping intervention procedures on target for the individual goals of each client.

CHAPTER V

THE CLIENTS

John Kugler

The Comprehensive Learning Program served a number of individuals over the course of the three years of the grant. In that time more than 60 potential clients were screened and of that number 40 individuals were given a full evaluation from which data could be drawn.

Demographics

The average age of the group was 30.2 years old (+ 8.9 years). The distribution of gender was almost equally divided between males and females. The male-female ratio did not match that normally found in the school based studies of children referred for learning problems (generally three males for every one female). The main difficulty in comparing our sample with other school samples on many of these descriptive statistics is that in both cases those included were not usually randomly chosen but were instead generally referred. The difference between our group and that of a school is that these clients were self-referrals, while in the schools those identified as learning disabled are often referred by the teacher. Therefore, some learning disabled students who are not as readily noticed by the teacher (because of quite unremarkable behavior) may be overlooked in lieu of students who are acting out.

Table 2
Gender of Clients

Sex	N	Percent
Males	21	52.5%
Females	19	47.5%

The program operated in a large metropolitan city whose population consists of varied ethnic, racial, and religious groups of people. The sample of individuals who participated in the program reflected this diversity. We found that learning

problems affected people from various cultural groups and SES levels, regardless of educational background (i.e. public or private school) or intellectual level. With such a varied group, issues of dominant language development and bilingualism must be appropriately addressed on a case by case basis. The data on ethnicity are presented in Table 3

Table 3
Ethnicity

	N	Percent
White	16	40.0%
Black	11	27.5%
Hispanic	11	27.5%
Asian	2	5.0%

The people who sought our services came from a variety of occupational backgrounds. The grouping of clients was based on the census categories used by Wechsler (1981) in his standardization sample. Many of our clients worked at jobs that did not require taking licensing examinations or well developed literacy skills. One client, for example, went to work for a tree pruning service, another while he had obtained a college degree (despite having grammar school level reading and spelling skills) worked as a doorman. Several had tried on different occasions to take various exams (e.g. beautician) but had not been able to pass the written part of the exam. A number of clients (approximately 30%) were unemployed at the time they came to the program.

Table 4
Occupation by Census Group

Group	N	Percent
Professionals/Technical	4	10 %
Managers/Administrators, Sales/Clerical	10	25 %
Craftsman/Foreman	2	5 %
Operators/Service	12	30 %

Laborers	4	10 %
Not in Labor Force	8	20 %

Referral Source

The clients were referred to the program through a variety of sources. The majority were sent to us by educational program or human services agencies. This accounted for almost half of our clients. A second source was the Learning Disabilities Hotline (LD hotline) that operates in New York City with the support of NewYork Learning Disability Association. The third source was other clients or friends who had some contact with the Consultation Center in the past. Finally, the Office of Vocational and Educational Services to Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) referred several people to us.

Table 5
Referral Source

Source	N	Percent
Agency/Ed. Program	18	45.0%
LD Hotline	11	27.5%
Friend or Client	8	20.0%
VESID	3	7.5%

School History

The range of education varied among the sample. Several clients never had obtained a high school diploma for various reasons (e.g. participation in Special Education, dropping out of school). One client related that when she was 19 years old she was told (incorrectly) that she had to leave school because she was too old to continue. A number of these clients had sought some type of help previous to finding our program. They reported, however that the size of the classroom and the level of the reading materials made it too difficult for them to continue in these programs. Their skills proved in the majority of these cases to be further below the level of reading required for a number of these programs (this is seen in scores on achievement measures). Data on levels of education are provided in table 6 (grades

completed). In addition three clients had obtained a General Education Diploma (GED).

Table 6
Grades Completed

Grade	N	Percent
9 or below	5	12.5%
10-11	14	35.0%
12	14	35.0%
13-16	7	17.5%

Thirteen of the clients in school since the passage of P.L. 94-142, received some form of special education intervention. Many of the people who came to us had gone through school before the advent of the P.L. 94-142. However, there were a number of clients who had received some form of help while going to school.

Educational Functioning

Measures of educational achievement in terms of grade equivalents indicated that a majority had difficulty in the areas of reading and spelling. Mathematics skills generally were better developed , although many found that they were "rusty" on basic skills. The reading measure on the WRAT-R measured identification of common words in isolation. This could draw on phonetic "sounding out", identification by visual configuration, or some combination of the two methods. These clients tended to rely more on a sight word approach. However, the fact that their reading levels were so low indicated that such an approach in isolation was not a successful strategy for them. Phonetic decoding was, in a majority of cases, at a very low level of development, (relative to their other reading skills). The reading comprehension scores were at a slightly higher level. This suggested that, although their decoding skills were underdeveloped, they were still able to get some meaning out of what they read. This could be explained to some degree by the use of context cues and the limited number of choices available to clients when responding to this test. Spelling appeared to be even more adversely affected by the lack of accurate and accessible phonological knowledge. It seemed that the greater the numbers of choices available, in general, when encoding as opposed to decoding, more readily indicated the gaps in word attack knowledge that these clients possessed,

Table 7
WRAT-R Standard Scores

Test	S.S.Mean	S.D.	N
Reading	68	19	40
Spelling	65	16	40
Math	68	13	38

Table 8
Woodcock-Johnson (Reading Cluster)

Mean Grade Equivalent	S.D.	N
5.1	3.5	38

Table 9
Phoenician Dictation test

Mean	S.D.	N
8.0	6	18

Cognitive Functioning

Measures of cognitive functioning indicated that many of the clients had at least one IQ score that was within the average range of cognitive functioning. It was often the case, however, that certain subtests suggested the adverse effects of their learning disability. This was evident in the subtests that were most related to educational experiences which often proved harder for these people than other tests which might tap abilties closer to life experiences.

Table 10
WAIS -R Group Means

Scale	Mean	S.D.
Verbal	83.30	9.50
Performance	87.53	12.88
Full Scale	83.30	9.21

Range of IQ Scores

Range	VIQ	PIQ	FSIQ
80	18 (45%)	11 (27.0%)	17 (42.5%)
81-90	14 (35%)	13 (32.5%)	14 (35.0%0
91-100	6 (15%)	10 (25.0%)	7 (17.5%)
101-110	2(5%)	4 (10.0%)	2 (5.0%)
111+	-----	2 (5.0%0	-----

Clients were asked to reply in writing to the question: What would you expect to get from this program? Some of their verbatim responses are quoted below:

"I hope school can help me to lead to read and waret." (J.E.)

"I would like to learend to spell beter and read beter so that I can get more meaningful job." (K.A.)

"Learning has become more important to me because I feel I have certan blocks in my life that learning can help me remore. I need to feel that I can depend on myself more and becoming more enlighted will affort one this desire." (J.B.)

"Reading spling onthesiningwring." (D.F.)

"To read and to c and do mat." (R.M.)

"I like to Read for my little girl.
I have to get my GED.
I have to get a good job.
So I have the thing I like." (D.G.)

"I hope to learn too spell and wright sow that I can better my shelf at work. And for my own peace of mime." (T.F.)

"I wh like you to hlp me w my rending so I can muv up in my copane and allso a bater job and make more mane." (D.R.)

"How to understand subject studies better and to do better work at them and memorize such math problem steps, Writing, economics and fasicility understanding the material itself." (P.F.)

'I wath a good job.
I wath a E K (education)." (B.W.)

" I would like to learn how to read and write. So I can better my self. I feel if a person they can be kable of learn many other things. Is --- be kable of learn to read and write. So hope forly I would be achive that. " (J.L.)

"A better live is what I'm hoping for at work and at home with the children because it takes a lot to be happy." (D.S.)

" I would love to improve my comprehhension when reading. to be able to read alound with confidince in myself that I have a talent something that I have worth." (S.F.)

"I would like to learn to do mathen and read vere good. Sellne wold vergood and dod the compete. (computer)." (R.T.)

"I wooed like to raed and wreati. I wooed like to raint to must of my fanuish by my soffs." (N.O.)

CHAPTER VI

TRAINING TUTORS

Elizabeth Lorenzi

This chapter will present a model for preparing volunteer tutors for work with adults who are learning disabled. The use of volunteer tutors in program implementation is a controversial issue. While cost-effective, some people have suggested that volunteers may not provide the quality of service necessary for program effectiveness. For this reason, it is critical that volunteer tutors be carefully selected, sufficiently trained, and provided with on-going supervision. The use of older adults enrolled in Fordham University's College at Sixty was a distinctive feature of our project. Recruitment of tutors was a shared responsibility of the Project Director of College at Sixty. This was accomplished through informal contacts with individuals and through announcements by the College at Sixty's directors. Six formal training sessions were scheduled during September and October of Year 1 and II of the project. A total of twenty two tutors were acquainted with the practical application of educational interventions designed to improve the decoding, encoding, comprehension, and writing skills of adults with learning disabilities. Demonstration of specific strategies and role playing were found to be especially effective during training. Training focussed on the following topics.

Responsibilities and Rewards of Tutoring

This initial session served as an orientation to the objectives and the staff of the Comprehensive Learning Program. We expressed our appreciation for the tutor's interest and explained how the need for cost-effective individualized educational intervention for adults with learning disabilities prompted us to incorporate volunteer tutors into our program. Because tutors were enrolled in a post-secondary institution and exhibited a strong desire to learn, they served as appropriate role models for our clients.

At the onset of the program, tutors were expected to meet with clients twice a week for an hour per session. However, because of the realities of daily life (i.e. jobs and children), clients preferred to meet with tutors on a weekly basis for

approximately two hours. Tutors were responsible for scheduling sessions with clients at mutually convenient times and exchanging phone numbers in case a session had to be rescheduled. Tutors were expected to maintain professional standards, particularly with regards to confidentiality of client information. Because tutors were provided with relevant background and diagnostic information, it was important that this information was kept exclusively within the confines of the Comprehensive Learning Program.

Understanding Adults with Learning Disabilites

Tutors need to be sensitive to the problems associated with learning disabilities. Since learning disabled individuals often have difficulties with temporal organization, late arrivals and forgetting of appointments were common, especially during the initial stages of the intervention. Tutors needed to remind clients to write appointment dates into their daily calendar books which were supplied by the program.

Another problem, termed the "first session syndrome", referred to the client's inclination to cancel or fail their first appointment with the tutor. We believe this syndrome occurred for interesting reasons. Once the clients discovered that they have the opportunity to learn, they become responsible for taking an active role in achieving their academic goals. This encouragement seems to create a paradoxical reaction: the client is relieved to learn that the frustration experienced in school is related to the disability rather than "laziness", yet is apprehensive about their chances for success and experiences fear of failure. Thus while clients are motivated to deal with the challenge of learning, they are afraid they will not be able to succeed. Tutors need to be reminded not to interpret clients' failure of appointments in a personal way. Consequently, they may need staff support, especially during the initial stages in which the tutor/client rapport is being established.

Job Analysis of Reading and Skill Building Techniques

This session was focussed on introducing the tutors to our approach to teaching reading. While most individuals take reading for granted, we emphasize that reading is a complex process that requires the learner to integrate a variety of skills. For the learning disabled individual, it is important to break down the reading process in terms of the specific skills the client needs. Intervention plans

are, therefore, based on the client's strengths/needs as determined by psychoeducational testing.

The model used to teach reading to adults with learning disabilities was developed by Rosa A. Hagin (Silver & Hagin, 1990) as the Job Analysis of Reading, is comprised of four major components.

Perceptual Skills Visual skills include the clients' ability to discriminate likenesses and differences of letters in their correct orientation; auditory skills refer to the process of blending isolated sounds in sequence so that a recognizable word results; and laterality refers to the client's ability to follow the convention of left-to-right progression and making accurate return sweeps to the succeeding line of text when they reach the end.

Word Attack Represents the ability to recognize words by sight, phonic or structured analysis, contextual or language cues. The tutors specifically used the **DOMinate** method to teach word attack.

Comprehension The ability to understand the meaning implicit in the content being read. Developing oral vocabulary and reviewing words in context is essential for obtaining meanings in reading. It also includes literal comprehension and inferential reasoning

Study Skills At this stage, reading becomes a tool for acquiring information. Organizational and memory skills need to be developed and reinforcement activities provide opportunities to practice newly learned skills.

Skill Practice

Because reading is viewed as a developmental process with complex components, tutors needed an opportunity to practice a variety of teaching skills. Therefore, the purpose of this session was to provide the tutors with hands-on experience on how to teach the perceptual, word attack and comprehension skills introduced in the previous session. In addition, the tutors had the chance to become familiar with the Laubach literacy materials that the clients would use for practice in reading comprehension. This reading series develops word attack skills

systematically. Word attack methods (DOMinate) using the following steps were practiced:

Written Language Activities

A major focus of this session was to emphasize that writing is basically a thinking process and must be conceptualized as such. An idea poorly clarified in the mind of the writer will also be unclear on paper. Teaching writing involves: generation, elaboration and ordering of sentences. Specific methods to improve the written language of adults with learning disabilities will be explained in detail in our chapter concerned with Educational Interventions.

Developing an Appropriate Intervention Plan

During this session tutors were given sample intervention plans and guided through the process of putting a lesson together. Specific techniques were reviewed in terms of their appropriateness for a particular client. Tutors began to appreciate the heterogeneous nature of learning disabilities as the cases were presented. Tutors also had the opportunity to review other educational materials such as Practice in Survival Reading (Kelly 1978). Selections focussed on developing map skills, time table reading for trains and buses, filling out applications, and balancing a checkbook. Survival learning is gaining knowledge that we need to read in order to function well in society.

Supervision of Tutors

In addition to this formal training program, informal supervision on a weekly basis has been provided by the Project Director and Assistant Project Director. Supervision proved to be essential in monitoring the tutor's implementation of a prescribed intervention plan. Tutors were responsible for keeping detailed logs of teaching activities and providing qualitative information regarding client motivation and performance.

Supervision also provided emotional support to tutors, especially during their initial sessions with clients. Client lateness and failed appointments resulted in tutor frustration and feelings of incompetence. Tutors needed to be reassured and given the opportunity to review teaching strategies taught during the training sessions. The tutors' anxiety significantly decreased as their sessions with clients increased.

CHAPTER VII

EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION

Rosa A. Hagin

Educational intervention in the Comprehensive Learning Program was shaped by the needs of individual clients as shown in their response to the screening and diagnostic assessment. Emphasis was placed on the integrated development of language skills (oral vocabulary, reading, writing, spelling, and composition) relevant to their individual needs; content, in so far as possible was chosen in terms of their current and future educational and vocational directions.

A variety of commercially available texts and computer software, as well as teacher-made materials, was utilized in individual instruction that focused on learner's needs, rather than any preconceived curriculum. Thus the reading text for Deborah might be a child's trade book (such as A Fly Went By or the Five Chinese Brothers) because one of her major purposes for joining the program was to be able to read to her daughter; the reading text for Jimmy was Gardner's Art Through the Ages because he was unable to complete his work at art school without passing a course in art history. The reading text for Bobby was the menu from the restaurant where he worked in the kitchen; he had been promised a management position when he was able to read the management's directions for portions and service. Sonia, who had little experience with reading instruction in English, used the survival skill materials of the New Readers Press.

This choice of content did not, however, mean that tutors depended upon motivation implicit in texts for the structure of the lessons. Instruction in the program was skill-driven, organized in terms of our conceptualization of the various literacy skills. For example, the reading process has been conceptualized in the Job Analysis of Reading (Silver & Hagin, 1990). This model defines reading as a complex process that can be analyzed according to four components: prereading skills, word attack, comprehension, and study skills.

Components of Reading

This area includes such visual perceptual skills as the discrimination of likenesses and differences of letters, the recognition of symbols in their correct orientation, and the organization of these symbols into groups of syllables and words (chunking). Reading also requires auditory skills such as discrimination and matching of sounds, blending of isolated sounds so that a recognizable word results, and the accurate temporal sequencing of sounds in words and sentences. To read English, the reader must also focus on the figure to attend to words or parts of words on a line and to ignore the surrounding words, and to make an accurate return sweep to the succeeding line when the end of a line is reached,

Word Attack

This area involves the versatile use of a number of processes to decode words. Some words may be recognized by their individual characteristics or configurations, such as signal cues, letter combinations, downstrokes, and tall letters. Words can also be identified by use of contextual cues, such as guessing what makes sense in terms of the content and the grammatical conventions of the language. Mature readers also use word structure (syllabication, inflectional endings, prefixes and suffixes, and word combinations that result in compound words.). In general, people with learning disabilities have difficulty with visual recognition of words and often know so few words that they cannot use contextual cues or word structure. They need to be taught systematic methods of phonic analysis and synthesis with a gradual introduction of the nonphonetically regular "sight words", if they are to read with any degree of independence. Finally, word attack principles in English must always be qualified with a number of exceptions, so that the reader must use all word attack skills with what Gibson (1969) has termed "a set for diversity."

Comprehension

Basic to getting meanings in reading is the development of a broad oral vocabulary; conversely, reading disability often results in a limited oral vocabulary because new words are learned from one's reading. Reading requires the reader to select from a range of multiple definitions the exact meaning implicit in the content being read.

Understanding may range from literal comprehension of factual content to inferential reasoning and appreciation of the abstract aspects of the text.

Study skills

This is the area in which reading becomes a tool for acquiring information. These skills enable the reader to locate and retrieve elements in a sequence, to select relevant content, and to organize for retention and application that content relevant to their purpose.

Written Language

Test results and writing samples were analyzed in terms of the clients' needs for work with the following results:

-fluency of written communication
-accuracy of spelling on formal measures and in spontaneous writing
-familiarity with common spelling generalizations
-application of phonic "rules"
-mastery of sight "words"
-legibility of handwriting
-organization of written work (ability to plan a draft, write coherently, use topic sentences, summary sections)
-writing style and grammar (variety of expression, use of connectives, use of complex and compound sentences)

Mathematics

These skills were analyzed in terms of

-basic concepts of time, space, numeration, measurement
-accuracy of the four fundamental processes with whole numbers, fractions and decimals
-understanding mathematical symbols and abbreviations
-comprehension of mathematical relationships in word problems and ability to operationalize these relationships for accurate solutions

Organization of Teaching Results

Individual plans were made for each client and were discussed with each tutor in ongoing supervisory sessions. Teaching logs (see sample log in the Appendix), were

introduced for several reasons. These logs were directly related to the overall teaching plan, thus insuring that lessons targeted the specific needs of the clients. Logs also simplified record keeping and quality control of sessions. Most important of all, the shared goals clearly defined in the logs emphasized for clients the importance of each session and the progress they were making in reaching the goals.

Four components structured the teaching sessions:

Oral Language and Vocabulary This component included orientation in terms of date, place, itinerary to the Center, discussion of current happenings in the life of the client, and at least one major news event; review of new vocabulary cards from the text of the previous lesson and preparation of new cards for words or concepts expected in the current lesson; check-off of assignments and attendance; use of the day book (provided to each client by the project) for planning appointments.

Word Attack Practice All our clients had deficient word attack skills, although their levels of achievement varied. Those with oral reading scores below the third grade were taught using the DOMinate technique developed at the School Consultation Center. This technique teaches the sound-symbol correspondences of the major phonic elements. Phonemes are introduced in a systematic sequence, first in isolation. A sound card is made with the letter on one side and a key word and picture drawn by the client on the reverse side of the card. The client is asked to "say" the cards by producing the sound and the key word (e.g. "/m/ as in man; /a/ as in apple"). When sufficient sound-symbol associations to form simple words have been learned, controlled lists of phonetically regular words are used in three processes that form the first syllable of DOMinate:

> DICTATE uses dictation of sound elements to model blending of phonemes into recognizable words containing high frequency of the sound element being taught.
>
> ORAL READING uses oral reading of the dictated words to achieve automaticity in recognition

MEANING uses silent reading of the same words to focus on comprehension of the words by means of a guessing game (i.e. "which word on the list means the name of some clothing?")

Reading phonetically regular text then gives the client opportunity to apply these newly learned word attack principles in context.

With clients who already had some of the basic phonic generalizations but applied them inconsistently, some of the commercial materials were used to fill in the gaps. New Readers Press Laubach Way to Reading (1982) was used with the less advanced clients in this group andVowel Power (1984, 1989) with the more advanced clients.

The importance of accurate, automatic word attack skills cannot be underestimated in work with adults with learning disabilities. For example, Perfetti & Hogoboam (1975) have shown the relationship between automaticity in word attack and accuracy in comprehension. One means for providing such mastery is in the use of the computer with a voice synthesizer to provide additional, self-motivated practice in word attack skills. One series of programs was particularly helpful in targeting such practice: Hint and Hunt (Developmental Learning Materials, 1985). While this program cannot teach sound symbol relationships to clients who do not know them, the potential of such a program to give clients practice with rapid auditory discrimination, sound symbol association, and accurate visual discrimination of the phonic relationships in short words and syllables is excellent. Our use of this program is illustrated by a client age thirty years. She would arrive early for her appointment, quickly secure the program, and get to work on her own. Night after night she could be heard, chuckling happily as she zapped words as directed by the computer's voice synthesizer.

Reading Comprehension

A wide range of materials was available for work in reading comprehension. For clients with limited word attack skills the Laubach Way to Reading (New Readers Press) were useful. Survival comprehension skills were taught using Reading for Life and Reading for Results (Royce, 1979). Teacher-made materials were also useful in encouraging accurate comprehension of newspapers, magazines, catalogs,

advertisements, school bulletins, recipes, order forms, menus, receipts. For clients who needed help in making effective use of contextual cues and high level reading comprehension, the elementary and secondary levels of the Reading for Understanding kits (Science Research Associates) were sources of multi-level materials.

Written Language Work

This component drew heavily upon the written tasks relevant to the daily life of the clients. Schoolbook assignments were avoided; real life tasks (applying for a job, writing a letter of application, completing school application forms, keeping personal records) were used instead. Clients with very limited skills were taught the Fernald tracing technique by which the words they learned were assembled in a word file as a basic writing vocabulary. For clients with difficulties in getting ideas on paper, Talking Text Writer (Scholastic) enabled them to hear what they have written by means of the computer and voice synthesizer. Reading and Writing Connection (Hartley, 1986) was a helpful computer program for practice in organizing sentence Components and developing complex sentences. More advanced clients worked on word processing programs using a basic keyboarding program (Typing Tutor) and Appleworks. One client learned how to keep his checkbook electronically by working his way through the Quicken program.

Recap

The final few minutes of each session was used to review and record in the Teaching Log what had been accomplished during the session. Not only did Recap produce more accurate records of the teaching session, but it also gave a sense of closure and accomplishment to the client.

CHAPTER VIII

VOCATIONAL COUNSELING

Elizabeth Lorenzi

This chapter is concerned with vocational issues as they relate to learning disabled adults. It will first present an overview of relevant vocational research, emphasizing the importance of espousing a developmental perspective. Second, the significance of vocational assessment will be discussed and an intervention program will be described in terms of its ability to increase the vocational maturity of learning disabled adults. Third, case studies will be presented to illustrate the particular difficulties encountered by this population and the vocational outcomes achieved upon the completion of the program.

Background

Pollaway, Smith, and Patton (1984) provide us with a lifespan perspective when considering programs for the learning disabled adult. Interventions need to reflect specific life problems commonly experienced by adults. Therefore, the learning disabled adult must be understood not only in terms of academic deficits, but from a broader framework of life adjustment.

Subscribing to a developmental perspective makes it possible to understand learning disabled adults in terms of unresolved developmental needs that may be interfering with their ability to achieve a certain level of career maturity. Vocational development theory derived its principle thrust from Super (1957) who proposed the following stages:

> Growth (0-14 years) during which individuals develop self-concept and self-understanding as well as basic skills that will equip them for work in the broader community.
>
> Exploration (15-24 years) in which adolescents increase understanding of themselves and their abilities and begin to explore the world of work in order to make choices that will eventually result in implementation of a vocational choice.

Maintenance (middle age to 65 years) during which individuals have maintained the skills that led them to occupations that they have selected.

Establishment (25-40 years) during which individuals have made a commitment to an occupational area and find niches for themselves.

Decline (65+) in which the individual is required to deal with issues of retirement and to seek other non-vocational sources of self-fulfillment.

Each of these stages requires successful completion of certain developmental tasks. Tasks that occur during the adolescent exploratory stage are particularly relevant to vocational development. These tasks include tentative stages during which the individual considers his abilities, interests, values and begins to explore these tentative choice vis-a-vis his discussions, educational resources and part-time employment opportunities. In late adolescence and early adulthood come tasks related to commitment to a vocational choice. It is critical that these exploratory behaviors occur in a planned and goal-directed fashion. In order to facilitate this process, the individual needs basic academic skills acquired during consistent education as well as the development of a positive self-concept and a realistic understanding of the world of work.

The learning disabled adult often demonstrates a lack of knowledge regarding career opportunities and specific training requirements. This gap is attributed, in part, to their difficulties with reading. Because a good deal of knowledge about the world is acquired through reading, the learning disabled adult is at a disadvantage. With a history of academic frustration, the learning disabled adult is often afraid to invest time in the career exploration process for fear of continued failure. As might be anticipated, the years of deprivation and low self-esteem severely hinder the learning disabled adult's career decision-making process, causing them to frequently settle for vocational outcomes that are both inappropriate and unrealistic.

Vocational Assessment

Cognizant of the close relationship between educational achievement and successful vocational placement, we planned vocational assessment to be an integral

part of the Comprehensive Learning Program's diagnostic process. The Adult Vocational Assessment Interview (AVMAI) was used to measure the attitudinal, behavioral and cognitive aspects of vocational maturity (Manuele, 1983). It is one of the few appropriate measures available for use with the learning disabled population. Although the AVMAI was originally developed to assess the difficulties encountered by economically disadvantaged individuals, it seemed appropriate to use with the learning disabled population since many of the practical problems were similar in both populations (Bannatyne,1971, Ursillo & Manuele, 1987).

The interview format is particularly appropriate to use with learning disabled adults since performance is not affected by reading ability. Responses are rated on numerical scales ranging from 1 through 4, with defined scoring criteria representing gradations of vocationally mature behavior. Responses that reveal more goal directed activity, higher levels of awareness, and more independent intrinsically-oriented behavior earn higher score on the AVMAI. The five scales, comprised of seventy one items, are outlined below (Manuele, 1983, 1984).

Orientation to Educational Work measures attitudes toward education, knowledge of educational and training opportunities as well as evaluates attitudes toward work, and directions for prospective employment.

Concern with Choice assesses attitudes toward choice and measures crystallization, wisdom and accessibility of choice.

Self Appraisal explores attitudes toward self, examining knowledge of the individual's strengths, weaknesses and perceptions of interrests and abilities. Clarifies personal and work-related values, attitudes and extent to which the individual has progressed toward setting and attaining life goals.

Exploring Occupations measures knowledge of preferred occupations in the areas of job-related responsibilities, salary, education, training requirements, employment and advancement opportunities.

Using Resources assesses attitudes, knowledge and use of formal and informal resources for securing employment and further training with emphasis

on classified advertisements, employment agencies, letters of inquiry and use of the telephone.

Positive evidence for the validity and reliability of the AVMAI is described by Manuele (1983, 1984). Internal consistency analysis of the AVMAI, as reported by Manuele (1983), ranges from .57 to .78. Inter-rater reliability studies yielded percentages of agreement for three raters on each scale ranging from 88 to 89 percent with a rater agreement of 88% for the entire measure (Manuele, 1983).

The following are examples of questions included in the AVMAI:

-How do you think education can or will help you?

-Do you feel you have a choice about the type of work you do? Why? Why not?

-What are some of the things you have done to try and find out about your own interests and abilities? Taken any tests? Talked to any counselors? Tried different jobs?

-How confident are you that you would be able to succeed and achieve the educational goals you have set for yourself?

Clients Assigned To Vocational Group

AVMAI results were discussed with our vocational consultant and recommendations were developed to meet the specific needs of individual clients. Selection for placement in the Vocational group was dependent upon the clients' current vocational status and reading ability. Clients younger in age (22-23), who would benefit from active exploration without major life disruptions, were considered to be most appropriate. Vocational group participants also demonstrated higher cognitive functioning and were reading at or above the sixth grade level as measured by the Woodcock-Johnson Battery (Reading Cluster). The Vocational Group met on a weekly basis for two hours over the course of a ten month period.

Intervention

To address the vocational problems confronting our learning disabled adult population, we used the Adkins Life Skills Program as the primary tool for intervention. The Life Skills Program is rooted in developmental and psychoeducational theory and has been used effectively with disadvantaged populations (Wald, 1981; Cullinane, 1985). It was designed to be delivered in small groups, focusing on the direct training of individuals through the use of sequential learning experiences. Individuals gain self-understanding by evaluating strengths and weaknesses, exploring vocational options, and taking an active role in the career decision-making process. Adkins' (1974) four stage structured inquiry learning model guides the individual's educational experiences:

Stimulus Stage Each of the ten life skills units begins with a videotaped presentation of an individual confronting a difficult predicament. This particular format serves to arouse interest and provide a structure for discussion.

Evocation Stage During this stage, convergent and divergent questioning techniques are used to elicit from the group the critical issues presented in the video. Individuals define the problem, describe related personal experiences and develop viable solutions. Client responses are recorded on flip charts in order to keep the discussion focussed and to "dignify the learner".

Objective-Inquiry Stage Subsequent to the Evocation Stage, clients engage in a variety of learning experiences in accordance with their individual learning styles. For example, some clients read books and pamphlets while others talk with prospective employers regarding specific job requirements and responsibilities. A major goal of this stage is to assist clients learn the basic skills of inquiry and resource identification.

Application Stage The primary objective of this stage is to assist clients resolve their vocational difficulties by providing them with opportunity to apply what has been learned to real life and/or simulated conditions. New skills are practiced and feedback is provided by the group.

Life Skills Units

Units One, Three and Seven were selected for use in our program since they addressed the critical vocational issues confronting our learning disabled adults. In addition, time constraints did not permit the use of the entire ten unit program.

Unit One, entitled Exploring Who I Am and Where I Want to Go, is designed to assist clients explore and discern their personal attributes as they relate to vocational decision-making. Clients were active participants in a variety of self-assessment activities and by the end of three months were at a point where they were able to select examples of jobs that were most appropriately matched with their abilities, skills and work values.

During Unit One's Stage, clients viewed a short videotape depicting a man who is dissatisfied with his job. After the life Skills Educator elicited the group's general reaction to the tape, key issues were identified and clients used personal experiences to generate solutions to problems. Clients appeared to be identifying with the character portrayed on the tape, nodding their heads and mumbling "yes, I know that feeling!" under their breath. Several individuals disclosed that they felt "stuck" because they lacked specific skills and the confidence to pursue alternative career paths.

During the Objective-Inquiry Stage clients completed a Life Stage Chart. The Life Stage Chart prompted them to reflect upon past experiences and realize that many of their career decisions were made without careful consideration of personal interests, skills and values. At this point, it was salient for the Life Skills educator to point out that a Life Stage is not necessarily defined by one's chronological age. This was important because many of our clients were still dealing with identity issues associated with the adolescent years. Clients learned that personal changes must be made if the individual is to grow and face difficult challenges. Clients also learned that life experiences are shaped by assets and liabilities. While our clients were quick to identify liabilities (i.e. academic deficits, lack of training), they had difficulty enumerating their individual assets. Clients disclosed that they were afraid to find alternative careers because they had frequently experienced "failure". This fear of failure relates to the failure and frustration they had experienced throughout their academic years.

The concept of risk-taking was introduced and clients differentiated impulsive risks from well-thought out risks. The group admitted that they "hid behind their learning disability", settling for jobs and blaming their underemployment on the fact that they could not do much more. They seemed to assume the role of a "victim" feeling helpless and overwhelmed with the thought of exploring alternative careers. While there may be some validity to their feelings, they needed to deal with their fears and make more appropriate vocational choices.

At the end of Unit One clients prepared a videotaped presentation integrating the vast amount of information they had gained. While the clients were a little apprehensive, they realized the value of such a learning experience. Clients provided each other with constructive feedback and proved to be quite supportive. The presentations were also powerful in motivating clients to seek resources they needed to explore career alternatives.

Unit Three, entitled Making Good Career Decisions , assisted our clients make a choice from the group of job career alternatives they had investigated. They were introduced to this decision making process by reading an article which described how good career decisions are made. It was important to emphasize that effective decision making is a skill that can be learned. It involves going through a process with predictable steps. The issue of making choices becomes less overwhelming for the learning disabled adult when the process is broken down into smaller, achievable steps. The first step involves self-exploration whereby the client carefully examines his/her interests and skills. Although this step was the primary focus of Unit One, it is reviewed and summarized (on a form) to facilitate the process.

The second step involves learning how the world of work is organized, in order to determine which jobs have the best to offer in terms of satisfying individual interests and skills. Clients sort through cards that help them identify job choice factors (i.e. level of education, training requirements) which are important to their decision-making process.

The third step of the vocational decision-making process requires the client to use all the information gained in the previous steps and list the advantages and disadvantages of each job explored. Selection of realistically possible jobs are determined after weighing interests, abilities, and available resources. It is

important to emphasize that the decision making process is continuous. As the individual develops skills and discovers new interests, decisions are modified.

Unit Three activities challenged the group to confront their anxieties and their tendency to procrastinate. Clients learned how to prioritize and develop a step by step plan to attain their career goals. In addition, they develop strategies for coping with difficulties on the job situations rather than feeling frustrated and helpless. Learning effective decision-making strategies empowers the clients, concomitantly improving their self-esteem.

Unit seven, Developing a Career Plan, is instrumental in teaching clients active strategies for achieving their career/educational goals. Many of our clients expressed difficulty with time management and organizational skills which can interfere with their ability to reach their goals. Clients learn to estimate the amount of time and money needed to research appropriate information sources. They develop day-by day plans in order to diminish anxieties and facilitate a feeling of accomplishment when proceeding through the various stages of vocational decision-making.

In addition to Unit Seven activities, the Life Skills Educator scheduled individual sessions with clients. Because clients had reached different levels of career development, individual sessions made it easier to handle specific vocational needs/concerns without interfering with group learning. As they progressed through the various stages of vocational development, it was evident that clients were actively struggling to achieve their career goals. Their increased confidence and goal directed behavior enabled them to pursue career which they once thought to be an impossible feat.

The following qualitative analysis shows how one client developed increased vocational maturity.

Rhoda is a 23 year old college graduate who had aspirations to attend law school when she first entered our program. After graduation, she worked part-time as an assistant in the law school library because she was unable to secure a more competitive position. Rhoda is from a middle-class background and her family has always been achievement oriented. Her older brother attended an Ivy league university and is successful in his chosen

career. Analysis of Rhoda's pretest AVMAI data showed that Rhoda exhibited characteristics associated with pre-mature foreclosure identity status.

Premature foreclosed individuals are especially rigid and authoritarian in their attitudes. If these individuals are not sufficiently challenged to question their pre-programmed assumptions and values, they may remain dependent on others for self-definition.

While Rhoda had made a commitment to pursue legal studies, it was clear that her decision was not the result of personal searching and exploring. Rather, it was a superimposed commitment determined by internalized parental/societal expectations. The following AVMAI responses highlight Rhodas' vocational problems:

(What are some of the things you have done to try and find out more about the type of job or career you might be interested in?)

> "Nothing.....I just thought about law and thought it was a great job with status".

> (What other choices have you thought about?)

> "Nothing, expect law".

(What are some of the most important things you want from a job or career?)

> "I want prestige and money...I want people to know I am important or smart like my friends and parents".

Rhoda's AVMAI responses reveal that she lacked a clear understanding of her interests and abilities and needed to explore realistic career options. She described herself as a "window person," someone who is determined to succeed even if it is meant depending on other to help "push her through". Upon questioning it was clear that she meant that because her skills prevented her from entering the proverbial "front door," she needed to enter by the back door or the window. She presented herself as an aggressive young woman, but it was evident that she was a confused adolescent holding onto external perceptions of what she should be.

Rhoda's disposition gradually changed during her participation in the vocational group. Initially she was abrasive and insensitive to the others client's experiences. She assumed a condescending attitude, emphasizing her own strengths while targeting others' weaknesses. Her defensive posture was in part attributed to her attempt to protect herself from the reality that she did indeed have a learning disability. Thus, it was most important for Rhoda to come to terms with her disability in order to develop a more realistic perception of herself and her abilities. The vocational group challenged her to acknowledge her learning disability and she gradually became more comfortable with disclosing her true feelings and fears. She began to realize that she had incorporated external definitions of success and was struggling to achieve them in order to be accepted by peers and family members. The group helped her to see that most of her energy was spent on living up to expectations in order to hide her learning disability. Rhoda was overcompensating for her feelings of inadequacy since she learned to equate learning disability and failure.

Once she came to terms with her learning disability she was able to develop a more positive self-concept and realistic vocational goals. For example, by the end of the year, Rhoda had re-evaluated her law school aspirations and had decided to secure a position as an administrative assistant at a law firm. This enabled her to be financially independent and provided her with a realistic perspective of the legal profession.

In addition, her decision to take evening courses in paralegal services allowed her to assess her ability to handle the academic demands of law. She deferred her decision to attend law school, realizing that obtaining a position as a paralegal serve as a more realistic short-term vocational goal.

It is too soon to know Rhoda's vocational outcome. However, some changes are apparent. The following AVMAI responses reflect Rhoda's vocational maturity upon completion of the vocational component of the program:

> (When you think about jobs you might get in the future how would you like them to differ from the ones you have had in the past ?)

"Well, I would like them to be in an area that I really like and feel fulfilled in. I do not want to worry so much about what other people think".

(What would you say are some of the goals you have for yourself ?)

" I would like to continue working as an administrative assistant at the law firm. I am learning a lot and it helps me see what it is really like to be a lawyer. I hope to also begin taking a course in paralegal studies this fall so I can see if I like it.

CHAPTER IX

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

John Capozuca and Ashley Roughsedge

Overview

This chapter is concerned with the social and emotional aspects of adults with learning disabilities. The first section will report on how the current project assessed the social and emotional status of program participants, and how these data impacted on client assignment to the support group. A second section will describe the support group, providing an understanding of how the component evolved and why formats were varied. The final section will offer process notes of three support group meetings to provide the reader with a sample of what a typical session was like.

Assessment

For the purposes of our project, the emotional status of clients was assessed from two sources:

-self report within the context of the intake interview;
-Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) data from the psychodiagnostic test battery.

Because the intake interview is a part of the initial screening for client/ program suitability thus providing information prior to the administration of the comprehensive test battery, these data are primarily responsible for assignment of clients to specific program components, such as the support group. TAT data, which became available only after program assignments had been made were used for cross validation of hypotheses regarding emotional status based on the self report data and to further refine and clarify details of psychodynamics.

Self-Report

The primary purpose of the intake interview was to obtain a detailed educational history. This information was used to ascertain whether the client had experienced a long history of school failure often associated with learning disabilities, as well as to analyze the results of previous attempts at intervention. In the course of obtaining the history, the affective response of the client was taken into consideration. This might include the client's reactions to academic difficulties in childhood, parental attitudes, peer relationships and current emotional responses to continued academic and vocational difficulties secondary to learning problems. These data were employed in determining a given client's need for assignment to the support group component of the comprehensive learning program.

The Thematic Apperception Test

The Thematic Apperception Test has emerged as one of the most widely used projective techniques (Polyson, Norris and Ott, 1984). Though undergoing some minor revisions since its introduction (Morgan and Murray, 1935), the present test remains unchanged from the original. It consists of 31 pictures, some drawn specifically for the instrument, others culled from a variety of sources. In the present study, cards 1, 2, 3BM or 3GF (for males and females respectively), 4, 5, 6BM /GF, 7BM /GF, 8 BM/GF, 9 BM /GF and 10 were administered.

The authors based their test on the premise that an individual confronted with an ambiguous social situation and required to interpret it was likely to reveal his or her own personality in the process. The test was administered to all subjects according to the directions supplied in the manual (Murray, 1943). Accordingly, the test is presented as one of imagination and the subject is asked to create a dramatic story for each card shown, focusing on the current situation depicted, the events leading up to the scene, some statements regarding the thoughts and feelings of the protagonists, and the outcome. Inquiries are permitted only to clarify ambiguous statements, otherwise the stories are recorded verbatim. Numerous systems for scoring and interpretation have surfaced over the years (Bellak, 1975; Rappaport, 1942; Rotter, 1946; Tomkins, 1947). In the present study, a variation on Murray's method (1943), later elaborated upon by Stein (1981) was employed. This system essentially involves the identification of the hero (or the character with whom the

subject has identified), the delineation of the needs of the hero (defined as drives or motives, covert or overt), the delineation of press defined as forces emanating from the hero's environment or others in that environment, and finally determination of the outcome, defined as an analysis of the interplay of needs and press to answer questions such as: Do the strivings of the hero or the forces of the environment prevail? If the hero is opposed in his or her efforts does he or she manifest energy to counterattack? In this manner the examiner reviews each interaction of Need and Press and makes a determination of the overall degree of success or failure to conclude the outcome. TAT was administered pre and post for participants in the Comprehensive Learning Program.

The Support Group

The support group was a significant part of the intervention program for our clients. Recent programs designed to address the needs of learning disabled people have included group support meetings in an effort to bolster the low levels of self-esteem common among individuals who have been subject to chronic failure experiences throughout their school years and into their adulthood (Blalock and Johnson, 1987). Furthermore, surveys of learning disabled adults have cited social and personal problems among the issues for which these individuals most often seek help (Chesler, 1982). Service providers and advocates for the learning disabled have also noted a strong need for emotional support for their clients (Hoffman, et.al., 1987).

In view of the experimental nature of the current project, the format of the support group was varied sightly from year to year in an effort to determine the most beneficial approach. However, the philosophical rationale for the support group, based largely on the experience of the project director in work with this population over many years varied less. It is the belief of the workers that the support group for the learning disabled adults is not, strictly speaking, a therapy group in the traditional sense. The most marked difference might be said to involve its adherence to a focus on issues related to learning disabilities. While this focus must not be misconstrued to mean a reluctance or a refusal on the part of the group leaders to allow participants to explore personal problems and issues that emerge in the day to day lives of all individuals, a focus on issues related to learning

disabilities, was felt to be appropriate to the needs that brought them to seek service from the program.

This degree of emphasis also provided the sort of single mindedness necessary, we believe to all group endeavors. Though it was made eminently clear to all participants very early in the group's history that the ninety minutes that were to follow belonged to them to be used as they saw fit, it was a responsibility of the group leaders to prevent the monopolization of the group's time by any participant or participants with rambling or broadly irrelevant issues. This may appear at first to be a contradiction in terms. As the group began to develop cohesiveness and direction, such efforts on the part of the co-leaders became largely unnecessary. The group members themselves, having by then become thoroughly familiar with these guiding principles, were quick to squelch any such attempts at drifting too far from our stated purpose.

One other rationale for the support group's primary focus involves our belief that simply unearthing issues within individuals, laying them bare, may indeed satisfy purient interests and voyeuristic tendencies as well as the desires of some inexperienced individuals to play at "being Freud". However, it does little good for the victim and may, in fact, cause a good deal of harm. Why, we might ask, should we delve deeply into the psyches of our clients, identify the underlying motives for their behaviors (assuming we are astute enough to recognize them) and then offer nothing in the way of resolution? The support group, therefore, is not an analyst's couch. While the co-leaders were ever willing to make referrals for individual counseling and psychotherapy when warranted, the purpose of the support group remained the exploration and understanding of personal and social problems engendered as a result of the learning disability. Not surprisingly, the maintenance of this focus was not difficult, because the participants were never at a loss for topics for exploration, whether past or current, at each meeting.

With the above caveats in mind, just how did the Support Group operate? During the project's first year the group met every other week for ninety minutes with both male and female clients in attendance. Originally, the specified evening (Tuesday) and time (6:00 pm) was not easily concretized for the members. Rather than interpreting this phenomenon as a pure resistance to intervention as might be done in some groups, a consideration of difficulties with organization, time, and

scheduling shared by many learning disabled adults must be made. This consisted of "multi-modal" reminders. For example, clients, all of whom had been given day-books in which to record their appointments, were encouraged to write in the date and time for group each week. Additionally, appointment letters were mailed periodically, and telephone reminders were made as often as practical. Still, it was not unusual for a group member (or even two) to appear for group on a Thursday at seven rather than at the prescribed time. Though challenges such as these were ongoing, many members attended with regularity. Of the six to eight individuals assigned, approximately four to six attended routinely. Clients would begin to arrive and assemble at the School Consultation Center and would then move to a nearby office reserved for the group's meetings. The co-leaders, a social worker and psychologist (male and female), would accompany them. A formal study of the support groups first year could not be made; however, several observations, as well as practical circumstances favoured a switch from coeducational to separate men's and women's groups for the project's second year. One observation suggested that women in the group may have achieved a state of cohesiveness more rapidly than the men. It appeared that the women were initially, at least, more comfortable discussing their feelings about their experiences, while the men seemed to prefer a stick-to-the-facts approach. In all, a wide range of issues were explored in the group, these included:

-the retelling of early failure and experiences in school.

-often tearful encounters with unsympathetic teachers, peers, and even parents.

-attempts at avoiding mistakes in parenting (e.g.. harshness) that they had experienced at the hands of their own parents.

-the tutor/tutee relationships: especially the difficulties associated with openly displaying the learning problems they had for so long endeavored to conceal.

-coping with rejection.

-exploring their often ingenious but ineffective compensatory strategies.

-learning the value of humor, especially with regard to ourselves.

-learning self-acceptance.

-perceptions of self and others and relationship to reality.

In exploring these issues in the group setting, clients developed the sense of having a "safe haven", where disclosure, to self and others, is disarmed of its usual threat to personal integrity. This process is, of course, encouraged and supported in watching and listening to other members to do likewise. In retrospect, it is clear that even the men, reticent to the point of reluctance at first, had developed a strong commitment to the group as a process and to one another as individuals. Though often employing the situation as a practical problem-solving forum, the sharing of experience, integral to the process of group, had undeniably effected a powerful resolve to understand. What follows are notes compiled by the co-leaders on selected support group sessions. They are offered in an effort to illustrate a highly dynamic and enlivened interaction that is, at best, extremely difficult to convey.(N.B. Names of participants have been changed to maintain confidentiality.)

Group Process Notes: October 25
Clients: Ava, Stephanie, Della, Josie, Dina

Discussion focussed on tutor/tutee dyad, especially mixed feelings of self-consciousness and relief at need to display learning disability during tutoring sessions, resolved to be a necessary part of recovery and repair. Della found this less difficult because she is so convinced that her tutor is non-judgmental, but her "old feelings" of rejection and ridicule tend to resurface. Stephanie related that her new tutor (me) is much "tougher" than her previous one, but that she feels much stronger now. Ava recalled the rejecting attitudes of her parents ("you're stupid and lazy"), but that her husband is very supportive, especially about the efforts she must make to come to the program (she is the mother of twins), and the sacrifice this means to the family. Later, a discussion of means of avoiding display of learning disability ensued, with some detailing of the ingenious techniques devised by the

members: Dina, who works taking complaints for the city housing authority created her own list of codes for the most common types of complaints and always kept it on her desk by the telephone. Josie, a singer, depends on her husband to proof read all of her correspondence. Ava, was forced to quit her job as a classroom paraprofessional when she became overwhelmed. Stephanie described how her career as a secretary was "saved" by Spellcheck having been installed on her wordprocessor. Della, a timekeeper for the city employees relied on her own "language" (a code system not unlike Dina's) that eventually became undecipherable even to her. Josie added that she is verbally skillful and would like to take advantage of this quality to "get by".

After a summary of what had been covered, I offered that the group might be thought of as the "heart" of our program, and the tutoring as the "nuts" and "bolts". I requested that the clients take note of their relationships with their tutors for later examination in group. I mentioned that the new co-leader, Ashley, would arrive next week.

Group Process Notes: February 28
Clients : Don, Joe

For the first meeting of the men's group, two clients, of a projected five, were in attendance. I made a brief opening statement in regard to the group having been formed as part of the total remedial program and that the group members would have the responsibility for selecting the agenda for each meeting.

Joe opened on the defensive with the statement that although the idea of a group might be fine...he was coming here for ***tutoring*** and resented losing time from that purpose. John and I assured him that the group sessions would, in no way, detract from tutoring time but were a supplement to that program. John stated that there are often issues surrounding learning diabilities which cannot be addressed in the tutoring process and that the group was intended as a forum for such issues.

Joe, somewhat reluctantly, subsided and, after an initial period of silence, inquired of Don how his tutoring was going. This began as exchange of views which brought out the differences in their individual learning disabilities and in the

tutoring methods utilized. James rose from his chair and using, the blackboard, illustrated some of the techniques he had acquired. Don was hard-pressed to fully explain that with his learning diabilities retention of input was difficult to maintain and that the transmission of correct letters from eye to hand was a problem for him. Several times he used the phrase "..... there's nothing I can do about it, I've always been like that", which appeared to disturb James who responded that he felt a positive attitude was critical to the learning process.

The session provided more interchange between the clients than we had expected from an initial group. Both clients expressed enthusiasm and, Joe in particular, the hope that other members would attend future groups. Both leaders were surprised at Joe's turn-about in attitude and, at his, willingness to participate. Don was open and honest in his admission of his specific learning difficulties. While there was some male posturing between the clients (i.e. both took pains to proclaim their various skills, for Joe, his acting and for Don his manual dexterity and mechanical ability). However, friction between these disparate clients was at a minimum in this session. What friction existed served to prompt both clients to further disclosure rather than forcing them to silence.

It was interesting for the leaders to observe that initially Joe addressed John (his tutor) almost exclusively and Don directed his comments to Ashley, but as we deliberately re-directed the focus and, for the most part, withdrew from active participation, an interaction developed between the two members.

Group Process Notes: April 4th
Clients: Emily,Josie, Della

Emily arrived shortly before 6 p.m. and was delighted to be "the first". Josie came a bit later and Della had called to say she would be there. At 6:20 we moved to the conference room without Della. Emily and Josie had been conversing during the waiting period so, in effect, the group had begun. This was borne out when Emily asked "well where should we start?" and Josie replied "I thought we already had".

Smiles and nods from the co-leaders seemed all that was necessary to begin the session . Josie was commenting favorably on Emily's appearance when Della

arrived and echoed that opinion. Emily was verbally modest, but beaming. She requested permission of the others to speak first, then presented her current situation with the HRA. That agency is requesting that she participate in the WEP program. According to Emily she has been in this position twice before and both times received neither meaningful work or training. "They just send you somewhere and you sit around all day-you get tired from just sitting around." This seemed to surprise Della whose experience with the program was that you did get sent ***somewhere*** to do ***something***. (Although Emily did not back down from her contention, I got the impression that in reality she had been sent on assignments which did not meet her criteria for meaningful work). She mentioned that she had read the F.E.G.S. booklet I had given her but without enthusiasm. (Enrolling in a training school is a second option for avoiding WEP). What appeared to be rather guarded trashing of the WEP program and the HRA system in general followed. All were in agreement that the system is dehumanizing and feel that, in part, it has been spoiled by abusers. They then began a general discussion of what sort of work Emily might like to do. Emily was quite open in admitting her fears and lack of confidence in returning to work but felt she had to "do something". At this point she raised the question of being retested at the center. The others were also interested in this and were pleased to learn that retesting is planned for later this month. Josie suggested that Emily might do child-care in her home. This was rejected as too much responsibility and "I want to get out of the house!". Brief exchange with John concerning the cosmetics business of which they have spoken before. This led to the disclosure by Emily that, as a young girl she had worked in her mother's beauty salon. Although she felt she could do hair very well, she was not interested in returning to this work. Della made a suggestion (that we will follow through in our next session) that she try temporary work first stating "that's what I did. Then they see that you are a good worker- get there on time and like that- and you do extra stuff sometimes and they say "wow, she picked up that chair!" so then you pick up two chairs and they say "wow, we should let her stay", then you have a job!.

At this point Emily deferred to Josie who then spoke of the turning point she feels herself facing in her singing career. She has decided to have her husband (who is a song writer) produce her next album and "shop it" (try sell it) as a team. While she is explaining the difficulties surrounding this move (which apparently include reverse racism in the music business as she made a point of the fact that her

husband is white) she is verbalizing a fierce loyalty to her husband which borders on sacrifice, but displaying a growing agitation in her vocal tone and rapid hand movements. When she returns to the specific area of what her singing means to her, putting aside the reality of the choice she is making, she relaxes a bit but retains on the edge of tension and a slight detachment from the group for the balance of the session.

In round-robin fashion, Della was called on with a comment from Emily that "getting her to say anything is like pulling teeth with your bare hands" which brought shared laughter and seemed to offer the proper challenge to Della who responded , "that's not true!. But you have to ask me stuff- I can't think of anything!" She responded to a question from Josie concerning her children by saying that they were fine and that her son was doing better in school. She then picked up the general theme of career goals by mentioning the Civil Service Test application (for which she had gotten Emily to apply as well).

She continued by stating that she now applied for almost every test she hears of, even though she has a terror of tests. Della appears to be the most pragmatic of the group and certainly displays an infectious, if somewhat fatalistic, optimism in explaining that she has realized that she (and by extension, the others) can't get anywhere unless she "takes a chance". She is also considering buying a house through one of the city renewal plan auctions and mentioned property in Harlem. This led to a discussion of viable neighborhoods, rent structures, and crime rates (a purse snatching and genital exposure, respectively) and shared a common fear of the subway system. Driving a car also came and both Josie and Emily (who have lapsed licenses) are thinking of retesting for reinstatement.

The group ran over time and continued back into the office, where the group members exchanged telephone numbers and inquired about Stephanie's return to the group (which is anticipated after tax-time)

The leaders were pleased at the dynamics of this group and the individual expressions of growth. Although there is still ambivalence on Emily's part and confusion on Josie's, all evidenced progress in ego development and, perhaps more importantly, indicated that they have come to the point where they are beginning to recognize that change is possible for them.

CHAPTER X

EVALUATION OF RESULTS

Rosa A. Hagin, John Kugler, Elizabeth Lorenzi, & John Capozuca

Results of the Comprehensive Learning Program were analyzed in terms of the overall effect of the program on its targeted goals. This involved evaluation of retest results and qualitative findings in the three intervention areas: educational achievement, vocational maturity, and emotional adjustment.

The evaluation component had the two-fold purpose of assessing first the ***overall effectiveness*** of the project (Did seriously learning disabled adults function better following participation in the Comprehensive Learning Program?). Data from the first two years of evaluation were used to answer these questions of overall and differential effectiveness and to modify program design during the third year to provide and disseminate what we found to be the optimal combination of services for adults with learning disabilities. Data for these evaluations was drawn from the following measures:

Wide Range Achievement Test R2
Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery Reading Cluster
Adult Vocational Maturity Assessment Interview
Thematic Apperception Test

During the first year the evaluation design used a one group pre-test/post-test design, with comparisons made between scores earned at the beginning and the end of the first year's intervention. The more conventional no-contact control group design was not chosen because withholding intervention from these clients seemed to be indefensible. Furthermore, if maturation, Hawthorne effect, or other non-experimental variables produced positive changes in their learning, these effects would have been apparent long before these people sought help from us for their learning problems. The evaluation at the end of the first year of the project provided data on the overall effectiveness of the comprehensive intervention program involving both tutoring and counseling interventions in producing gains in educational achievement and vocational maturity.

In the initial assessments, educational achievement tests showed that the majority of the clients had been unable to acquire basic decoding and reading comprehension skills either in school or in the years that followed. Therefore, helping them to improve these skills several grades or more in the time that they had participated in the program would suggest greater relative improvement than had occurred in all the previous years. It might also indicate that the difficulties that these adults encounter is a product of not only of their skill deficits, but also of the educational methods that were supposed to teach them to read. Therefore, effects of the program were not examined by comparing clients' achievement test results with a control group of normally achieving adults who had years of successful school experience behind them, but with the scores the clients themselves had earned over the course of the project.

Thus results of the evaluation measures were analyzed using a statistical procedure known as effect size. The effect size (E.S.) is based on the amount of change associated with intervention, according to the following formula

$$ES = \frac{X_{posttest} - X_{pretest}}{SD_{measure}}$$

This statistics takes into account the standard deviation of the measure being used in order to allow for different intervals among the instruments.. The actual value that is obtained is a standardized change score.

How can the educational impact of effect sizes be evaluated? Cohen (1977) provides rough guidelines for estimating the significance of effect sizes: an ES of .20 is considered small, an ES of .50 is considered moderate, and an ES of .80 is considered a large effect. The Institute of Education's Joint Dissemination Review Panel stated that an ES above .33 can be regarded as indicating that significant educational change has occurred (Tallmadge, 1977). These guidelines can be used as standards by which to examine the results of reevaluations obtained during the second year of the Comprehensive Learning Program in order to determine the practical impact of the program on the targeted areas.

First Year Program Evaluation

An important first step in evaluation was to identify the characteristics of the population being served. This included collecting data on significant variables that might delineate our target group from other samples. These variables included age, gender, ethnicity, highest school grade completed, intellectual abilities, vocational status, and academic skills. Program participants, as well as those applicants for whom the program was considered inappropriate, are described in detail in the section, Clients (Chapter V).

First year evaluation data were used for a combination of process and summative evaluations. First, an analysis of the program in progress was used to determine how closely the actual implementation matched the stated design. Second, the end of year evaluations were used to identify salient intervention components as seen from the viewpoint of the individual clients. Third, the product analysis indicated overall program effectiveness.

Three computations of effect size (ES) were computed from the first year evaluation data:

Wide Range Achievement Test R^2	ES
Oral Reading	.58
Spelling	.19
Arithmetic Computation	.20

Effect size for oral reading was .58. Using the guidelines provided by Cohen (1977) and Tallmadge (1977) one can conclude that an educationally significant change had occurred with the group's word attack skills. The results for spelling were not within the significant range, indicating that little change had occurred with that skill. The ES for arithmetic computation was within the range that Cohen considers small and is not seen as indicating significant change.

In considering the results of the first year of the project, it is important to understand the value of both significant and non-significant results. Because of the achievement level of the clients when they entered the program, it might be thought that any form of intervention could have some effect on their scores.

Confounding factors, including the Hawthorne effect and regression to the mean, might explain any significant results obtained. Therefore, it was felt that a comparison of changes in areas that were the focus of teaching (i.e. skills taught directly with areas that received little or no attention (i.e. arithmetic computation) would help us account for spurious results and make a more appropriate assessment of the program's effectiveness.

Results suggest that there was improvement in scores merely on the basis of participating in a program such as this. The improvement seen with arithmetic computation indicates that an E.S. of .20 is a rough measure of the confounding effects mentioned above. We chose this base rate because the majority of clients had not been tutored in mathematics and would not be expected to show gains in that area. Effect sizes greater than .20 would appear to be a more valid indication of actual change attributable to the program's intervention. Based on a comparison of the obtained effect sizes, there was a gain in reading of .38 beyond the extraneous effects noted above, but no real gain in spelling or arithmetic computation. Spelling however, did not appear to have improved beyond the aforementioned confounding factors, although it had been the focus of some tutoring.

Process analysis included examining the logs of tutors. The results of this analysis provided information needed to understand results in spelling. Examination of the methods used to teach spelling showed emphasis on general composition strategies in which clients were asked to write brief journal-type articles which were then corrected by tutors. Spelling errors were pointed out and words rewritten by the clients. Essentially this was a single word sight approach that did not draw on the decoding skills that were being used in teaching word attack in reading. In teaching spelling there was little emphasis placed on teaching phonological generalizations or codes that might have helped the clients encode the words independently (i.e. without the benefit of context or previous encounters with a given word). Therefore, workshops on encoding skills were held with the tutors to emphasize the needed teaching techniques.

To summarize, evaluation of the first year of the Comprehensive Learning program demonstrated a significant gain in reading based on E.S. Process analysis of test results and the content of tutoring logs indicated the need for specific training in

word attack skills for encoding in spelling. These results were implemented in the second year of the program.

Second Year Evaluation

The second year evaluation was focused on the differential effects of the program on educational achievement, emotional adjustment, and vocational development. Evaluation results for each of these interventions will be presented separately, followed by a case study that demonstrates how the various elements of the program served an individual client.

Educational Achievement

Four effect sizes were computed to assess the program effects on educational achievement:

Wide Range Achievement Test R [2]	E.S.
Oral Reading	.57
Spelling	.24
Arithmetic Computation	.38
Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery	
Reading Cluster	.77

These scores indicate a positive change in the skills of the participants, in particular in the areas of word attack in reading and reading comprehension. While arithmetic computation showed some increase, the ES was minimal for spelling.

Oral reading scores for the group produced an effect size of .57. The participants were able to identify more words relative to their scores when they first entered the program. One of the emphases of the tutoring had been on systematic development of independent phonological and structural analysis, because our initial diagnostic studies indicated that word attack was a serious problem for most of our clients. They had never learned how to identify words rapidly and accurately. This gap in skills interfered with reading comprehension because much of their attention was occupied in laboriously trying to figure out what the words said or, worse yet, in skipping unknown words while trying to guess at the meaning of the text on the basis of minimal clues drawn from the words they did know.

Perfetti and Hogaboam (1975) have shown that successful readers identify words (decode) automatically and can, therefore, focus attention on the meaning of the test (i.e. higher level comprehension). This relationship between automaticity of decoding and comprehension becomes evident when one examines the performance of the clients on the Woodcock-Johnson Reading Cluster. This measure taps three skills: identifying real words, decoding phonetically-regular pseudo-words, and reading comprehension. The overall effect size of .77 indicates that the improvement in these skills was significant in terms of the program's educational impact for our clients.

Anecdotal reports from the clients supported this finding. Many of them felt that they were reading more fluently and that these improved skills encouraged them to read more and to attempt more difficult text levels. The results show that, given focused and individualized educational intervention, these adults could learn successfully. One client summarized her feelings about her tutoring program as follows:

"It has helped me because now I can sound out words that I could not before. I feel that I am not stupid. There is a place that I can go to and get help I need so I can feel better about myself and that I can continue my education. There is a door opening up."

Emotional Adjustment

As has been described, all clients were given the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) as part of the full diagnostic battery upon entry to the program. Post testing occurred at the conclusion of the program's second year. Blind analyses of the content of the client's TAT stories was completed, utilizing a variation of Murray's method of scoring (Murray, 1943; Stein, 1981) yielding the outcome index. The outcome index is determined by tabulating the interactions of needs and press and determining a score for each interaction (plus for need prevailing; minus for press prevailing).

An examination of outcome indices pre-to post-testing revealed a 41% increase in positive outcomes from 41% to 82%. This finding indicates that client's stories were overwhelmingly more optimistic, having favorable outcome at the

time of post testing as compared with the pretest on entry to the program. This finding suggests that clients felt significantly more empowered to exert influence on outcomes in their lives after participation in the program. Conversely, a 41% decrease was found in negative outcomes from 59% to 18% pre-to post-testing. This finding supports the contention that clients in the program tended to feel significantly less controlled and less vulnerable to external forces after program participation.

A second analysis dealt with major themes related to achievement in clients' TAT stories. Among the pretest stories analyzed, 41 were found to have achievement themes. An examination of post-test stories showed that 66% had themes related to achievement. A t-test performed to compare the mean number of achievement related themes indicated a significant increase in achievement orientation from pre-to post-testing ($t= 5.20$, $df =12$, $p< .0001$). Conversely, non achievement related themes in TAT stories decreased significantly, with the means for pre-test non achievement related themes at 5.38 and the post test mean for non achievement related themes at 3.54 ($t= 4.38$, $df= 12$, $p< .001$).

Adding the outcome factor to the achievement orientation factor provides intriguing results. Twenty-three percent of the clients' stories with achievement related themes resulted in positive outcomes, while 19% resulted in negative outcomes. Thirty-three percent of the post test stories generated by clients with achievement related themes resulted in positive outcomes, while 7% resulted in negative outcomes. This finding indicates that achievement related themes with positive outcomes increased 19% from pre-to post-testing, while achievement related themes with negative outcomes decreased 12%.

These data suggest that clients were more likely to see themselves as striving to achieve and to influence actively outcomes in their lives after participation in the program. Furthermore, they were more likely to make an effort and then fail. It is one of the most demoralizing facts of life in the history of learning disabled adults to expend tremendous effort and then to fail. This is the scenario so often depicted by our clients in the intake interviews and in the support group transcripts. Worse still, it is this fruitless effort that was so often unrecognized by the significant others in their lives, their parents, teachers, and peers.

To summarize, analysis of the TAT suggests that the emotional status of our adult clients improved during their participation in the program in so far as their perceptions of achievement and successful outcomes are concerned. It remains to be seen, perhaps in a follow up study, if they have been empowered sufficiently by their new-found confidence and optimism to translate these promising findings into positive outcomes in their lives.

Vocational Development

As with the educational achievements, the results of vocational intervention were analyzed using effect size (ES). This method is described in detail on pages 74. Briefly, ES is a means of determining the practical significance of intervention results. The obtained statistic is a standardized change score, defined as the difference between a group's post- and pre-test means divided by the standard deviation of the measure, in this case the Adult Vocational Maturity Assessment Interview (AVMAI). Thus as ES of 1.0 would indicate that the group improved one standard deviation. Cohen (1977) presents guidelines for interpretation of ES, whereby an ES of .20 is considered small, and an ES of .50 is considered medium, and an ES of .80 is considered large effect size.

As stated earlier, program participants were assigned to intervention groups based on individual needs. Pre-and post-testing on the AVMAI was completed on clients to determine changes in levels of vocational maturity at the end of the second year. The effect size for the group who received vocational counseling through the Adkins Life Skills program was 1.95. This group improved almost two standard deviations upon the completion of the program. This statistic indicates that the Adkins program had significant impact on the vocational maturity of our clients.

Pre-and post-test results on the AVMAI were also compared in terms of changes in vocational maturity with the group who received social work services. This analysis produced an ES of .48, indicating that moderate changes in vocational maturity have occurred with this group. Although the counseling dealt primarily with issues of emotional adjustment, these changes in vocational development are not unexpected. Vocational concerns were dealt with, along with other personal issues during the counseling sessions. When a client's self-esteem is strengthened,

as it is during counseling, one might expect that positive effects on client's ability to explore career alternatives would result. Another indication of vocational development was seen in the number of clients who had been been unemployed initially and who were beginning to seek employment or further education. The following chart documents vocational status and continuing educational plans for second year clients.

Table 11
Vocational and Educational Outcome

Client	Employment		Further Education
	pre	post	
1.A	unemployed	health aide	4 yr. college
2.A	stock girl	model	
3.B	singer	singer	music school
4.B	paralegal	paralegal	law school
5.C	unemployed	museum aide	data processing
6.F	unemployed	seeking job	dental technician
7.F	secretary	f/t student	4 yr. college
8.G	stock girl	stock girl	basic Ed. Classes
9.G	housewife	housewife	GED classes
10.J	carpenter	carpenter	community college
11.J	educ. assistant	educ. assistant	community college
12.L	col. student	asst. ind. design	
13.L	unemployed	civil services	
14.M	unemployed	waiter	
15.M	clerk	religious order	4 yr. college
16.O	maintenance	maintenance	rehab. agency
17.R	unemployed	receptionist	GED Classes
18.R	unemployed	file clerk	
19.S	clerk	clerk	community college
20.S	student	admin. assistant	paralegal training
21.S	student	messenger	
22.W	rec. aide	rec. aide	
23.W	unemployed	kitchen asst.	rehabilitation

Illustrative Case

The Case of Charles

Charles, a 25 year old male, was referred to our program by the International Center for the Disabled to determine the nature of his learning disability and to seek directions for further training. Charles had experienced difficulties with reading and writing since his early school years. He was a student at a state university in New York for three years with a major in sociology. Despite his hard work, he encountered tremendous frustration and managed to accumulate only 80 credits during this time. Charles took classes in study skills and had tutoring in various subject areas. He believes that previous assistance was not tailored toward accommodating his learning disability. While he aspires to earn a college degree, he is discouraged by his failures. Charles said that he would like to receive assistance from people who know about learning disabilities because the other strategies just did not work for him.

After reviewing results of an initial screening which included a psycho-social history, measures of basic skills, and motivation, the Comprehensive Learning Program staff felt that it would be appropriate to administer the full battery of tests to Charles. The tests included the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised (WAIS-R), Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery (Reading Cluster), Neuropsychological Battery, and Adult Vocational Maturity Assessment Interview (AVMAI).

Charles earned a Full Scale IQ score of 94 on the WAIS - R which places his intellectual functioning within the Average range. On the Verbal Scale significant strength was seen on a task requiring abstract reasoning. Charles' performance on subtests assessing general fund of knowledge and social judgment indicates that he is functioning as well as individuals of his age group. Auditory sequencing/memory tasks were difficult for him. On the performance scale, Charles did well on a subtest requiring him to arrange a series of pictures in a logical sequence. His strengths on both verbal and nonverbal reasoning tasks indicate that he has the potential to do college-level work.

On the Reading Section of the Woodcock-Johnson, (Reading Cluster = grade 10.2) Charles demonstrated knowledge of common sight words. Reading of isolated nonsense words, however, showed that he needed to be taught word attack skills and structured analysis. Concomitantly, Charles' reading comprehension skills were limited because of his difficulties in word attack. Written language skills were very limited, as can be seen from the writing sample based on his human figure drawing that appears on the next page.

On the neuropsychological tests, signs of learning disability were evident. On the Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test, he verticalized and rotated several designs. He had difficulty retrieving commonly heard rote sequences and relied on verbal rehearsal. Charles, however, remained focused and worked effortfully despite difficulty with the tasks presented.

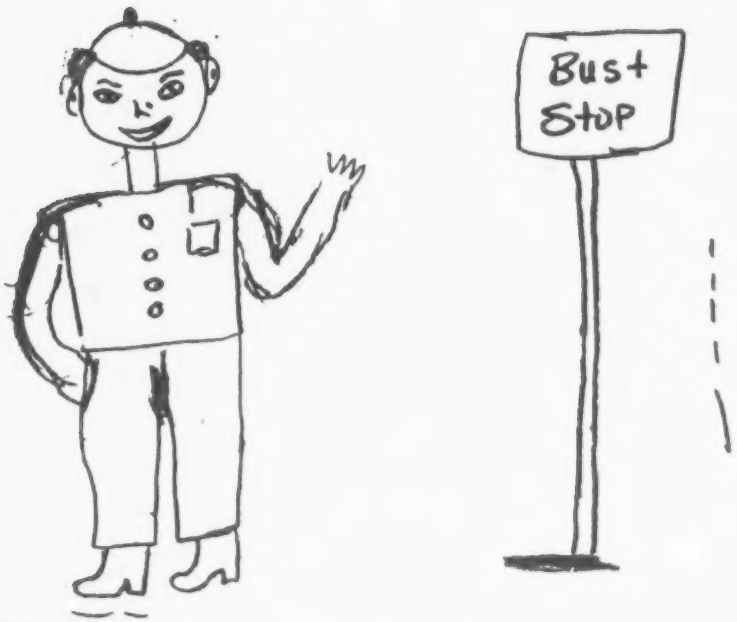
Based on data from cognitive, educational and neuropsychological measures, an intervention plan was developed and implemented to meet Charles' specific educational and vocational needs. During the course of an academic year, Charles worked with a tutor on the following skills:

-decoding and encoding words based on application of phonetic generalizations.

-work with written composition (planning, organizing, outlining and formating).

-specific strategies to improving reading comprehension (SQ3R).

In addition, Charles participated in our Vocational Counseling Group . During his enrollment in the group, Charles proved to be an influential member. He was very open, discussing his academic difficulties and frustrations with the other group members. He said that he was lost with regard to what career route he should take. Charles spoke about his interest in helping others and his aspirations to become a counselor. Based on Charles' participation in the group, his interests did seem to match his abilities; he was able to identify problem areas for other clients and support them non-judgmentally. However, it was important that Charles begin to focus on his own career development, rather than allow his concern for others to interfere with the process. Charles admitted that he tended to procrastinate in order to avoid failure. While he offered valuable insights to other clients, he needed to confront his own fears.



This is a picture of a Chine man. He is standing at a bust stop, waiting for a bus. This bus is going to ~~stop~~ Parity Close to is girl Friend House. The Chine man Name is bill. Bill is very Happy that he is going to see his girl.

Bill girl Friend Name is pat and She is preparing dinner For both of them. They will be celebrating The Six Mounth aneriversity of being together.

Charles scheduled individual sessions with the Vocational Counselor to discuss ways he could overcome his fear and begin to act on the knowledge he has acquired during the Vocational Counseling Group. He said that he felt the group was beneficial because it challenged him to take responsibility for confronting critical vocational issues.

During the course of the year Charles continued to be a motivated and valuable member of the group. He gradually was able to discern the relationship between his interests, skills, and work values and to develop realistic career objectives. He has gained confidence in his ability to reach his goals and seems able to complete his college degree in a human service area. He also recognized that he would need continued academic support, specifically with spelling and written composition. Charles also realized that his interests and abilities could be applied to several careers i.e. that one could counsel in a variety of jobs and settings. Most important, Charles is no longer procrastinating; he is actively struggling with the decision-making process and conquering his anxiety regarding failure.

Charles is presently enrolled in a four year college in New York City. With the academic support and vocational counseling with the Comprehensive Learning Program, he has developed the organizational skills that are necessary for success there. He has set realistic objectives:

1) he will pursue an Associates Degree.
2) he will secure a full-time position as a paraprofessional in the health care field.
3) when he is secure in his job, he will continue his studies and earn a Bachelors Degree in sociology.

Upon the completion of our program, Charles was re-tested to assess his academic progress. Post-test data indicate that Charles has made significant gains in reading. Decoding skills have improved and support his progress in reading comprehension. His use of contextual clues indicate that he is applying the strategies he learned while working with the program. While he has made significant progress, both academically and personally, he is strongly committed to further development in these areas.

CHAPTER XI

LESSONS LEARNED

Rosa A. Hagin

In any teaching-learning transaction it seems that teachers also learn some valuable lessons from their students. So it has been with those of us who have worked in the Comprehensive Learning Program. As we complete our work in this project, some review of lessons learned may be useful not only in consideration of our own accomplishments and mistakes, but also as an object lesson to others who venture into the complex, intriguing, important field of adult literacy.

During the more than four years of planning and operating our program, we have seen literacy become a topic of major interest. It has become a cause, a media-event, a promise for the year 2000. It is to be hoped that this widespread interest will be sustained, and that support will continue not only for the abstract concept of literacy, but for comprehensive services to individuals with learning problems so that they can make appropriate transitions to adult life. Given the enormity of the problem of adult literacy in the United States, the Comprehensive Learning Program is but a minute example of service delivery to one segment of the adult literacy population, adults with specific learning disabilities. As a model program within this microcosm, we have developed, operated and tested methods for meeting the educational needs of a sample of adults whose learning disabilities resulted in substantial handicap to employment. The lessons we learned have been many.

We have gained a healthy respect for these adults.

The people who came to us had suffered many hardships associated with their learning disabilities. They have received insults and disappointments at the hands of educational and governmental bureaucracies; they have been humiliated and exploited in the workplace; they have been scolded for laziness and inattention by their teachers and parents; they have been saddened by their own doubts about their ability to learn anything. Yet they have survived these hardships and made one more request for help with their problems. The complexity of their problems and

the ways our clients worked them out produced documentation for the original premise on which the program was built--that a comprehensive program is needed to serve adults with learning disabilities.

Teaching them to read is not enough.

Comprehensive services, including individualized instruction, enhancement of vocational maturity, and realistic emotional support, are necessary services for adults with learning disabilities. With these components in place, there is hope for change, even after many years of failure.

Time is a problem for adults with learning disabilities.

Problems of earning a living are intensified by a learning disability. Time available for interventions is limited by work and family responsibilities that do not exist with clients who are still in school. Thus adults with learning disabilities not only need comprehensive services, but they need the services to be available in one place in order to make the most of the time and efforts they invest in intervention.

We found that organization of time can also be a problem for adults with learning disabilities. Our social worker's suggestion that we provide day books for our clients proved to be a useful one. It not only decreased confusions over appointments, it was a step in organization of time that many of the clients had never tried before. In keeping their day books they learned to organize their work at the Center, but they also learned to keep track of the rest of the week as well.

Careful initial assessment is worth the investment of resources.

The people who called the program for assistance represented a variety of diagnostic problems. Our screening measures were effective in identifying applicants for whom our services would be appropriate and those for whom basic education programs, community mental health, or mental retardation services would be more appropriate. Screening was useful in locating learning disabled people we had some chance of helping, while also identifying those for whom our services would be ineffective, disappointing, or unnecessary. Diagnosis was also important in identifying individual needs within the group, so that the plan for services could be organized appropriately.

Diagnosis had another, rather surprising value for our clients, that of clarifying for them the nature of the problem. Many of the clients were unaware of the nature of learning disability and had never understood why they had trouble learning. In this respect, the diagnostic information carefully communicated to the client had, in itself, a therapeutic effect.

We learned to value the services of volunteers.

Our volunteers were drawn from a pool of intelligent, dedicated people, who had demonstrated their interest in learning by their enrollment in Fordham's College at 60. The importance of on-going support and supervision for tutors was also recognized. Teaching can be a lonely occupation; we found that sharing professional concerns with others over a cup of coffee can enhance instructional effectiveness.

Decoding and encoding skills were significant in our sample.

Most of our clients had participated in other remedial programs prior to joining the Fordham program. Running through the records of all our clients were deficiencies in word attack in reading and spelling in written language. Group methods utilizing silent reading for comprehension with only incidental instruction in word attack did not enable these clients to apply decoding and encoding skills in independent reading. These skills needed to be taught directly. After they had been taught, provision for practice to automaticity in word attack was also found to be essential to adequate reading comprehension.

Although some fine materials exist, there is need for more.

Most teaching materials designed for use with children cannot be used with adults. Although publishers like New Readers Press have made a start with texts for adults, more materials, particularly in the area of reading comprehension, are needed. Computer programs also are beginning to have an important place in instruction with adults. However, we found that the computer could not replace the services of a tutor; it was necessary to have the tutor nearby to assist in the use of computer programs.

Levels of vocational maturity varied among the clients.

Work in this program emphasized the importance of the concept of vocational maturity. What most of our clients needed was, not so much to find a job, but to learn about the world of work and how to go about finding their own individual places in that world. Substantive training through the Life Skills Curriculum and both individual and group counseling were the ways our program dealt with the vocational component. The changes speak for themselves.

Emotional support is a necessary service for some clients.

While the emotional strengths of our sample belied the myth of an inevitable relationship of learning disability and social maladjustment, we found that learning disability leaves emotional scars that must be dealt with in services for adults.

Well-planned evaluation increases program effectiveness

Carefully planned evaluation procedures were in place from the beginning of the program. Periodic reevaluations played a formative role in guiding the development of the program model. Summative evaluations documented what had been, at first, ideas supported only by hope and faith.

There is work still to be done.

Plans have been made for the institutionalization of the Comprehensive Learning Program at the School Consultation Center:

-The support group continues on Tuesday evenings with some clients from 1989-90 continuing and new referrals from the current year joining the group.
-Tutors continue to be trained, some of whom have been recruited from among the school psychology practicum students who have been working at the Center.
-The School Consultation Center has been approved as a vendor of Services by the New York State Office of Vocational and Educational services for Individuals with Disabilities (formerly VESID). Clients referred by VESID counselors will be provided with screening, diagnostic, and educational interventions by the Center staff according to model developed in the Comprehensive Learning Program.

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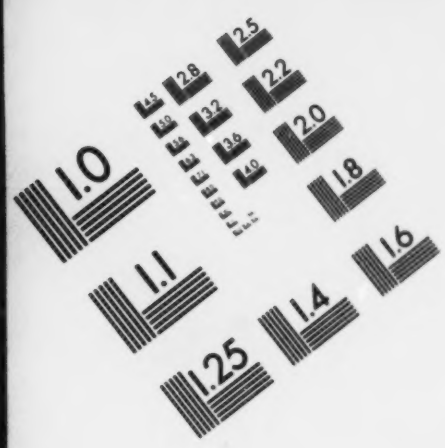

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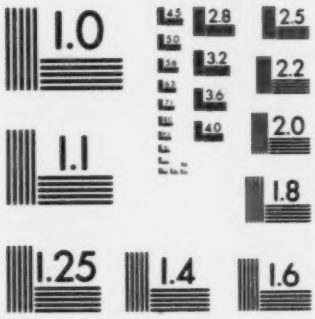

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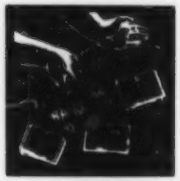
THE
COMPREHENSIVE



LEARNING

PROGRAM

For Adults with Learning Disabilities

A program teaching basic literacy skills, paced to the abilities of those with learning disabilities to improve their job prospects.

The Comprehensive Learning Program Offers:

Diagnostic interview to help identify career potential and interests

Assessment of learning problems

Individual tutoring in reading, math, and communications skills based on personal needs

Vocational counseling to identify interests and skills, with a focus on the real-world needs of the job market

Practical and emotional support during training

Individual educational plans

THIS PROGRAM IS HOUSED IN THE

Lowenstein Building at Fordham University's Lincoln Center Campus with:

Flexible hours

No fee

Group support sessions with other adults in the program

Trained tutors carefully matched to clients

Who Is Eligible?

Young adults of average or above-average intelligence with learning disabilities. The program welcomes those who have felt frustrated in their jobs or who are unemployed or underemployed because of their disabilities. It welcomes those who have not found help in other programs.

Who Provides Services?

The Comprehensive Learning Program is a cooperative project of Fordham's Graduate School of Education, the Graduate School of Social Service, and the College at 60. Project staff includes school psychology, social work, and special-education students and faculty of these schools. All tutors are recruited and trained through the College at 60.

SCREENING PROCEDURE

Name:_____ Place of Employment:_____

Date of Birth:_____ Hours of Work: _____

Address:_____ Tele # Work:_____

Home Tele._____

I. **Psychosocial History**

a. School History (Note academic difficulties/retention)

Post-secondary education_____

12th Grade_____

11th Grade_____

10th Grade_____

9th Grade_____

8th Grade_____

7th Grade_____

6th Grade_____

5th Grade_____

4th Grade_____

3rd Grade_____

2nd Grade_____

1st Grade_____

b. Family History

History of LD in family_____

_____

Medical history_____

_____

c. Work History

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

II. **Figure Drawing**

"Draw a Picture of a Person Doing Something?" Ask client to write about picture; who is person?, what is he/she doing?, how old are they?.

Note:

Immaturities_____

Disproportions_____

Slanted Orientation_____

Other:_____

III. **Wide Range Achievement Test** (WRAT-R)

Reading Score_____

Spelling Score_____

Math Score_____

IV. **Writing Sample**

"How can we help you?"

Note:

Syntax_____

Spelling_____

Punctuation_____

Capitalization_____

Other:_____

V. **Bender Visual Motor Gestalt**

Organizational Pattern_____

Errors:

Angulation _____

Verticalization and Rotation_____

Changes in Direction _____

Estimated Number of Figures in Recall_____

Actual Number of Figures in Recall_____

Loops_____

Cues_____

VI. **Hand Preference**

Right Left

VII. **Diagnostic Impression**

Possible L.D.?_____
Motivation_____
Strengths-Weaknesses_____

FORDHAM
University

School of Education

School Consultation Center
113 West 60th Street
New York, N.Y. 10023
(212) 841-5579

exit interview
5/29/90 CL

Dear D[redacted],

You have finished your participation in Fordham University's Comprehensive Learning Program. We suggest you contact the following agencies:

Board of Education-Region 7	Brooklyn College
P.S. 9 Underhill Ave.	1212 Boylan Hall
Brooklyn, NY	Brookyn, NY
(718) 638-1515	(718) 638-1515
Contact: Rosalie Kavadell	Contact: Alexa Morales

We recommend that you continue to work on the following skills:

1. Reading comprehension
2. Basic computer skills

Although we will not provide tutoring, we hope you come to the Support Group meetings in the fall. They will be held on Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m. with John Capozuca as the leader. Whether or not you can attend these meetings, we will be available if you need us. We look forward to hearing from you in the fall.

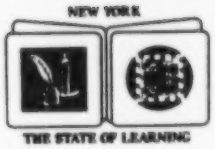
Sincerely,

Rosa A. Hagin

Rosa A. Hagin, Ph.D.
Director

Elizabeth Lorenzi

Elizabeth Lorenzi
Assistant Director



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, N.Y. 12234

OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

October 1, 1990

Rosa Hagin, Ph.D.
Fordham University
School Consultation Center
113 West 60th Street
New York, New York 10023

Dear Dr. Hagin:

This letter confirms our approval of the services and fees set forth in your August 28, 1990 letter. Fordham University School Consultation Center is approved for services and fees as shown below.

o Psychological Evaluation and Report - $100

Psychological, neuropsychological, and educational testing to determine the presence of a learning disability.

o Tutoring - $ 20 per session

Individually planned remediation to teach work-related literacy skills.

Thank you for your services to consumers of the Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities.

Sincerely,

Spencer L. Jennings
Chief, Provider Review

CLIENT:_____ TUTOR:_____ 101

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